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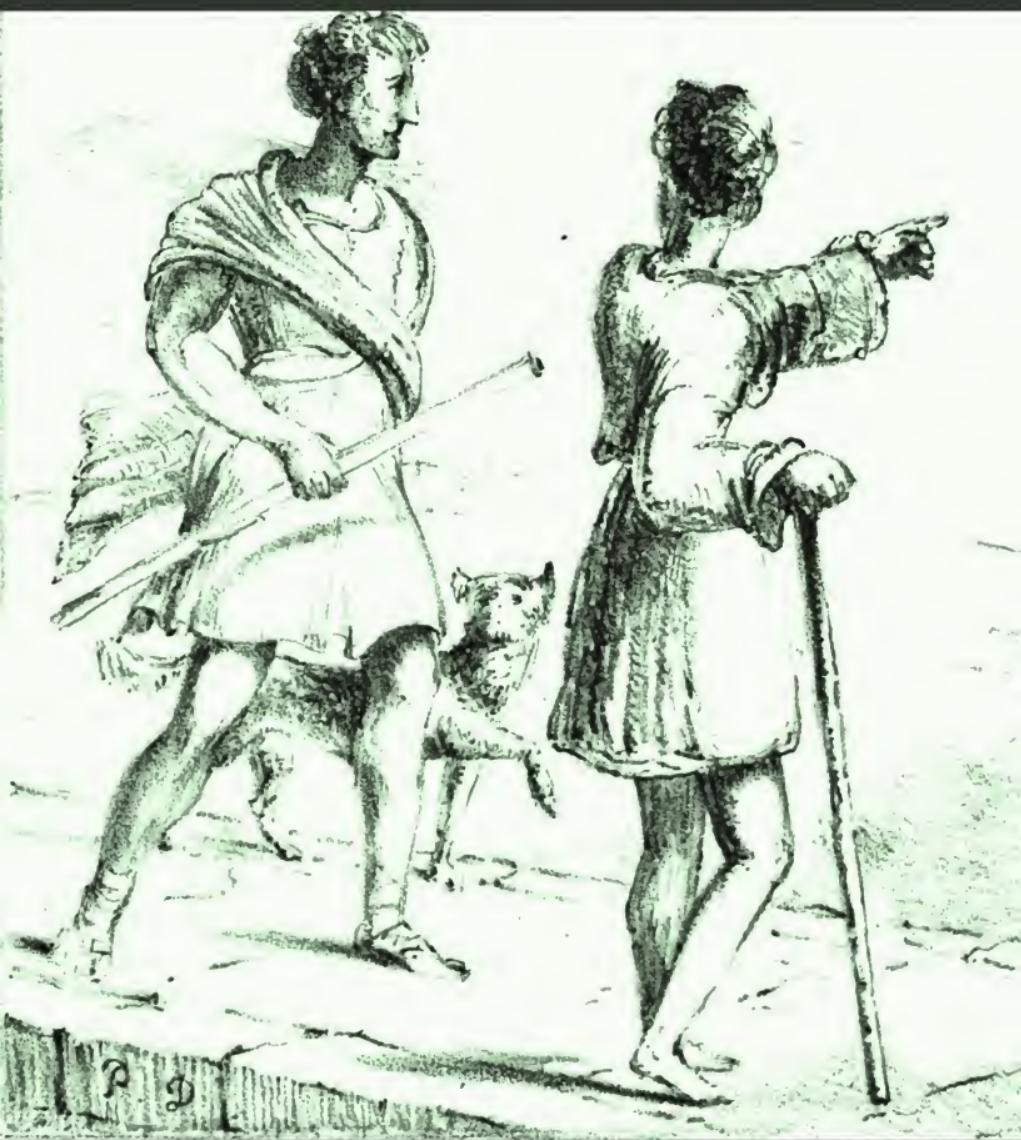
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*An abridgement of
the Apocrypha*

Caroline Maxwell



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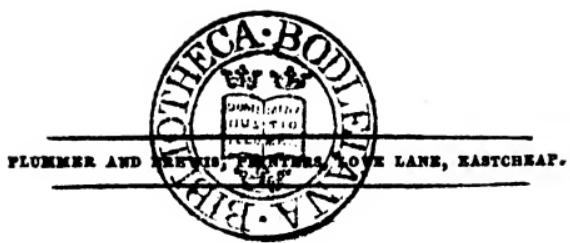
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BOOKS

From which the Extracts are taken, and the order in which they go.

ESDRAS.

TOBIT.

JUDITH.

ECCLESIASTICUS.

THE HISTORY OF SUSANNAH.

THE HISTORY OF BEL AND THE DRAGON.

MACCABEES.

INTRODUCTION.

As the Apocrypha is not introduced into every Bible, it is not, therefore, so generally read, or its beauties so universally known, as the other parts of the Scriptures; but as the books of which it consists, (whether or not, they might have been originally written in the Hebrew tongue), contain the principles of true religion, of the strictest morality, and best rules for conduct through life, of interesting delineations of the situation of the Jews; both before and after the Babylonian captivity; the prophetic, and beautiful allegories of

Esdras, the excellent proverbs and precepts in Ecclesiasticus, and the highly entertaining and instructive histories of Tobit, Judith, &c. &c. The author of “the abridgement of the Old and New Testament,” has considered that abstracts from these sources, might be rendered particularly useful and desirable; as every incident must tend to stamp deeply on the minds of youth, (in a pleasing yet decided manner), the fairest impressions of our duty to our God, our neighbour, and ourselves. And this our blessed Saviour has himself declared, and taught us to believe is the essence of true religion, and the basis on which is founded happiness, goodwill amongst men, prosperity (if not in abundance of wealth, yet in content and peace of mind), in the approbation of the good in this world, and our hopes in a future state. Convinced that all these useful lessons may be drawn from the chapters of the (almost neglected) Apocrypha, the selector of the following pages has endeavoured to put this idea into practice, and to present such a collection of extracts for contemplation, as she most sincerely hopes may be

found to answer that expectation, and to meet the approbation of those who have the important care of forming the young mind, and training the pliant principles with care and tenderness, into the paths which the scriptures so elegantly point out, and which alone lead to happiness and honour.

APOCRYPHA, &c.

ESDRAS.

(Before Christ 610 Years.)

DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AND CITY OF JERUSALEM, AND TAKING THE JEWS CAPTIVE INTO BABYLON.

JOSIAS, king of Judah, being a just and good man, became anxious to restore all the long neglected ceremonies of the Jewish Religion, to their original spendour, and that ancient magnificence which formerly distinguished them, (but which famine and other misfortunes had occasioned to be unattended to,) again to be established according to the institution of Moses. To effect this he made a solemn declaration, making known his intention of keeping the approaching Passover,

with unusual pomp and devotion ; and giving command that the same decorum and order should in all things be observed on that occasion, that had been prescribed by David, and equal to the grandeur displayed by Solomon, his son ; and correspondent in every particular to the law of the founder, Moses.

In conformity with this command of the king Josias, which was thus specified to the priests, and Levites, and the holy ministers of Israel, the king made a present to them of thirty thousand lambs and kids, and three thousand calves. And this liberal donation he made for the benefit of the priests, and for the entertainment of the numbers of people who would be assembled to celebrate this festival. All the Governors of the cities also, and other great men, following the good example set by the king, gave abundantly, and an amazing number of cattle was thus collected together for this important ceremony.

And when the time appointed did arrive, every thing appertaining was conducted with such strict attention to the regulations of Moses, the law giver, and there was such profusion of every thing desirable for the service of God, and the comfort of man, that it was said, "No such passover had been kept in Israel, since the days of the prophet Samuel."

After this, Necho, (or Pharaoh) king of Egypt, intending to make war against Carchemish, by the Eupharter.—Josias conceived it behoved him to go out against the Egyptian monarch; which Necho being informed of, sent a very amicable message to him, by an Ambassador, informing him that he felt no cause of anger against the king of Judah—that his quarrel was with Carchemish, of Euphrates. But Josias, whether from a fondness for warlike exercise, or from motives of jealousy and suspicion, paid but little attention to this friendly notice of Necho's, and would not be persuaded to keep out of the battle; and to effect his purpose, disguised himself, and went into the midst of the havoc and confusion of the field. In this situation he was mortally wounded, in the plain of Magiddo, and finding that death approached, requested to be taken off the field, which being complied with, he was carried to Jerusalem, where he died, and was deeply lamented by all Israel.

Several very bad kings succeeded the good and just king Josias; the wickedness of whom, in neglecting the service of God, deriding the inspired prophets sent by God to admonish them, and many other acts which were contrary to the divine will, which they obstinately persevered in so long, and so wilfully, that at length God forsook them,

and gave them into the hands of their most cruel enemies.—For the kings of the Chaldees came against them, who being victorious, slaughtered them without mercy, “and had no compassion upon young man, or maiden, old man, or him who stooped with age.” And they destroyed the house of God, brake down the walls of Jerusalem, and set fire to her towers; they likewise took away from the temple all the holy vessels of gold and silver, and all the king’s treasures, and never ceased their work of destruction, until they had consumed and brought all to nought, and those people whom they had not destroyed with the sword, they took captive and brought to Babylon, who became slaves and servants to the conquerors, to whose use likewise all the treasures they had brought away were converted, and this dreadful oppression (brought upon them for their neglect of duty) continued until the Persians reigned, which was the term of seventy years.

Cyrus, the great monarch of Persia, was most favorably inclined (through the mercy of God) to the suffering Jews, so much so, that he became determined to alleviate their condition, and also to rebuild the temple of God, and restore Jerusalem to its former beauty and magnificence; and to send back all the beautiful and costly vessels of

gold and silver, which his predecessor had plundered the demolished temple of, to replace in the one he was resolved to erect. The number of these curious and valuable vessels, were* “A thousand golden cups, and a thousand of silver, censers of silver twenty-nine, vials of gold thirty, and of silver two thousand four hundred and ten; so that all the vessels of gold and silver which were carried away into Babylon, were five thousand four hundred threescore and nine.” And with these precious relics, he likewise sent all the remaining Jewish captives, that they might aid and assist in the great work he contemplated, and again be restored to their religion and rights.

Before however this great undertaking was accomplished, Artexarxes became king of Persia, and that prince being full as well disposed as Cyrus was to proceed with the restoration of Jerusalem and her temple, he continued the same encouragement. But his secretary and ministers who evidently were inimical to the proceedings wrote to the king to caution and inform him, that if it should be completed, he would severely repent of the indulgence he had shown; as the Jews were

* It is said that some of these vessels are now in Rome, taken by the Roman Emperor Titus, and ever since preserved there with the utmost care, for the service of the church.

now, and ever had been, a rebellious and unworthy people, who would never acknowledge him, or pay tribute to him; and requesting him not to be regulated by their words only, but to have the records searched, and in the records of his kingdom he would find that their words were true, and fully discover from those pages, what an unruly and seditious people they had always been.

King Artaxerxes, much moved by this disagreeable intelligence, gave immediate command for the records to be examined, and there found that the accounts given by his vigilant officers was perfectly correct, upon which, being greatly dissatisfied with the Jews, he countermanded his previous order, and declared that the buildings and the repairs of Jerusalem should totally cease; which they did—the Jews being compelled by an armed force of soldiers to desist from the work, and in that forlorn and unfinished state it continued until the second year of the reign of Darius, five hundred and twenty-two years before the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

About this period of his reign, king Darius made a most sumptuous entertainment to all his governors, captains, and lieutenants that were under him, from India unto Ethiopia, and unto all his subjects and household, and to the princes of Media and Persia. The immense numbers which

must have been at such an entertainment, must have been almost incalculable; when of the governors alone, it is said there were invited those over an hundred and twenty seven provinces, with all the inferior officers and attendance; and how such a multitude could possibly have been supplied with a *feast*, is wonderful to contemplate.

The company had departed after this great banquet was concluded, and king Darius had retired to his bedchamber, when three young men, (of much consideration from the place which each held) who were of the king's guard, and who kept watch in his chamber; by way of amusement, whilst employed on that duty, proposed that each one should write a sentence, which should be sealed up, and laid under the king's pillow; and that when the king arose, they should be opened and read before him, and that sentence which should be declared best and wisest, that the king should bestow upon the writer great gifts and honours, such "As to be clothed in purple, to drink in gold, to sleep upon gold, to have a chariot with bridles of gold, and an head tire of fine linen, and a chain about his neck ;"

"To be seated next Darius, because of his wisdom, and to be called Darius his cousin."

Then each wrote his sentence, and arranged them as they agreed under the king's pillow, that

as soon as he was risen, the sealed papers should be given him for his perusal ; that he himself, and the three princes of Persia might judge to which of the three, from the wisdom of his sentence, the victory should be given.—The first wrote,

“ Wine is the strongest.”

The second young man wrote,

“ The King is the strongest.”

And the third wrote,

“ Women are strongest ; but above all things, truth beareth away the victory.”

When the king arose in the morning the sealed papers were given to him, and each of the writers stood in anxious suspence for the success of his own sentence. The king perused the papers, and was so much pleased with these specimens of the young men’s abilities, that he again assembled the princes of Media and Persia, and the governors, and all his officers, and placed himself in the royal judgment seat, and made his secretary read the sentences before them all ; which when done, he commanded that each one should come forward of the writers, and defend his own sentence, and prove before them that his was best : and give his reasons for that opinion.

The first, who had written of the strength of wine, supported his assertion by saying, “ Wine was the most strong, because it overpowered the

senses ; that men drinking it, forgot sorrow and debt : the heart of the king, and of the fatherless child, were all as one—the bond man, and the free man, the rich and the poor, were by it made on an equality ; that every heart was light from its effects ; and that a man in his cups, remembered neither king or governor, and forgot love and hatred, and will draw the sword on friend or enemy, and when from their wine remember not what they have done ; therefore, (he added) wine must be the strongest, which enforceth men to act thus.” And having thus spoken, he made way for the second to defend his sentence, who had said “ The king is strongest.”

This young man began by saying “ That all must allow that men were strong who bore rule over land and sea ; yet the king was more mighty than they were, for he commanded them what they should do ; either to make war against one another, or to send them against enemies, or go to break down mountains, walls, or towers. They were compelled at his bidding, to slay or be slain ; if they get the victory, they bring all to the king, and all the spoil becomes his. And for those who are not soldiers, but use husbandry, they also must bring the productions of their industry in tribute to the king, and he being but one man, can command to will, and it is done ; to spare, and it is

instantly obeyed ; to make desolate, or to build, to cut down, or to plant, and all these things are done at the king's command, without his having the least trouble, or its interfering with his rest or pleasure ; nay even those who are near him and keeping watch about his person, may not one depart about his own business, or disobey him in any one particular. ‘ Then should not the king be mightiest, O ye men, when he is in such sort obeyed ? ’ Having said this the second retired, and the third approached to declare his sentiments respecting what he had advanced, “ That woman were strongest, but that above all things truth bore away the victory.

This young man, whose name was Zorobable, said—“ It is neither the king, nor the multitude of men, nor wine which excelleth, but it is them who have lordship over all, and that is woman ? a woman has been mother to the king, to all those who rule by land or water, and to all mankind. Has nourished and brought up those who formed the vineyard, and made the wine, and without whom, man could not be. He again appealed to them, to answer whether man did not toil and labour to collect gold and silver, to present to the woman he loved ? —Did he not leave father and mother, and country, for the affection he bore to his wife ? And did not men rob, and sail upon

the sea, and encounter every danger, and even lose their senses, for the extreme love they had for the woman they selected as the object of affection ? By all which, they must feel assured of the powerful dominion women had over all. And as an instance (he continued) though all present would know how great the king's power was, and that every person would fear to touch him, yet had he seen Apame, the daughter of the admirable Bartacus, sitting on the right hand of the king, and taking even the crown from the king's head, and putting it on her own, and also strike him with her left hand, and yet—"the king laughed when she laughed, and if she took any displeasure, the king was fain to flatter, that she might be again reconciled to him." From all these circumstances can it be denied that women are the strongest ?

The king and the princes, conscious that what Zorobable had said was correct, looked upon one another, and was silent. Whilst he thus proceeded to speak of truth, as even more powerful than woman.

You must acknowledge (he said) that woman is strong, that the king is powerful, and wine potent ; yet how much greater is he that maketh all these things ? Wherefore great is the truth, and stronger than all. All mankind are wicked, and their works unrighteousness, but truth endureth,

is always strong, it liveth and conquereth for evermore; with her, there is no accepting of persons or rewards, but she doeth all things that are just, and she is the strength, power, and majesty of all ages; blessed be the God of truth. Having thus finished his speech, he retired, and all the assembly with loud acclamations applauded him, and agreed with him, that truth was above all things mighty. And the king was so delighted with his arguments, that he desired him to ask of him whatever favor he pleased, (beyond what was at first specified in the writing), and it should be immediately granted to him for the wisdom he had displayed.

Now this amiable and sensible young man, had a more worthy motive for what he had done, than merely to amuse the king, or obtain for himself riches, distinction and honour, his heart was warm in the cause of the Jews, and most anxious for the complete restoration of their ancient worship, in their own city and temple, he therefore had resolved, that should the king and princes determine in his favour, that he would exert his influence with Darius, for these unhappy people. Accordingly when the king thus kindly and encouragingly addressed him, he respectfully answered, by reminding the king, that he had vowed to rebuild Jerusalem, when he first came to the throne, and to restore the temple and replace

the costly ornaments, and that, as this princely liberality proceeded entirely from his own goodness, and voluntary promise, all that he asked or required, was the performance of that promise, which he had made in the presence of God.

The king on hearing this stood up, and kissed Zorobable, and instantly wrote letters for him unto all the Governors and their Officers that they should safely convey, not only him, but all those who should go up with him to build Jerusalem, and in addition to this, he gave command that all Jews should be free from tribute, and that no ruler, lieutenant, or treasurer should forcibly enter their doors, and that all that went from Babylon to build the city, with all their posterity, should for ever enjoy the same freedom; he likewise gave order for immense treasure for their works, for the maintenance of their priests, and for "pensions and wages," and likewise that all the vessels of gold and silver which Cyrus had formerly set apart for that purpose, should be sent to Jerusalem without delay.

When Zorobable found he had thus succeeded, and so far beyond his utmost expectation, he blessed God who had inspired him with the means of bringing about this great work, and when he took the letters and acquainted his brethren with it, they all joined in giving thanks to God, who had restored them

to liberty and wealth, and the permission to return and build their city and their temple ; and they feasted, with instruments of music, and gladness, for seven days, after which, all the principal people prepared for their return, with their children and servants ; and Darius sent with them a thousand horsemen, to guard them till they were safely arrived at Jerusalem ; and the procession went with the greatest joy and gladness, and with instruments of music playing before them all the way.

In course of time the temple was finished, was dedicated to God, and the passover kept therein, according to the book of Moses ; and all was completed by the commandment of God, and with the consent of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, Kings of Persia.

After this account of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the Books of Esdras contain but little which would be interesting to the juvenile reader, there being no further historical event, the remainder consisting of prophecies and visions, which occasion Esdras to admonish the Jews to repentance and sorrow for past offences, and to future hope of forgiveness and mercy through a Messiah ; and of allegorical allusions to their present actions and conduct, much of which he severely reprobates. One of those beautiful poetical descriptions (of

which there are many), shall be here introduced, and that will conclude the extracts from the Books of Esdras.

Esdras having been commanded by God to repair to a field of flowers, where no house was built, and to abstain from eating any thing but those flowers for a certain period, to prepare him for a visitation of the spirit, did as he was ordered, and went away into a field named Ardath, and sat amongst the flowers, which he found satisfied his hunger, and meditated on the instructions which it might be the will of God there to give him, or what revelations he might be inspired with.

Whilst deeply engaged in such ruminations, and inwardly offering up his prayers to heaven, he happened to look back, and on the right hand from where he stood, saw a woman, who appeared to be in the greatest affliction, she mourned and wept with a loud voice, was much grieved in heart, her clothes were rent, and she had ashes upon her head.

Upon this sight, the prophet was roused from his reflexions, and turning to her, asked in a voice of soothing kindness, the cause of the grievous affliction she was in? But she answered that it was her wish to be alone, that she might with more freedom lament her misfortunes, and begged that

he would not add to her misfortunes by intrusion, for that her sorrows were very severe, and that in consequence she was brought low. The compassionate Esdras could not however be prevailed on to desist from an endeavour to comfort her, and again requested to be made acquainted with what had occurred to give her such great trouble, in the hope that he might be enabled to render her some assistance.

She then informed him that she had been married thirty years, without having had any family, and that she had never ceased praying all that time, that God would bless her with a son ; at length her prayer was heard, she became the mother of a male child, and herself, her husband, and all her neighbours and friends rejoiced exceedingly, and returned God thanks for the blessing he had bestowed upon her. This son (which she had nursed with the tenderest care) she continued, grew up, and when of an age to marry, she had selected him a wife, and had made a great feast for the marriage entertainment, but that when her son retired into his wedding chamber, he suddenly fell down and died.

That on this dreadful calamity all the lights were overthrown, and all her neighbours came to comfort her under her affliction ; and on the second night (which was the one on which she was

speaking), thinking to leave her to repose, her friends had withdrawn, when she had risen up softly and fled into this field, where it was her intention to remain, never intending again to return to her home, but continue there to fast and bewail her loss, till death should release her from her sufferings.

Esdras reproved her very severely for having taken such an improper resolution, telling her that sorrow and mourning was the lot of human nature, and that it was wrong to give way to such despair for the loss of one son. "For even ask the earth (he said), and she shall tell thee, that it is she that ought to mourn, for the fall of so many that grow upon her." "Who then should make more mourning than she who has lost so great a multitude, and not thou, which are sorry but for one?" It may be answered, Esdras continued, that the lamentation of the earth cannot be like that of a tender mother, for the loss of an only child; but the earth bringeth forth with labour, and hath given her fruit, namely, man, from the beginning unto him who made her." He therefore exhorted her to bear her sorrow with firmness and courage, to acknowledge the determination of God, to be just, that in time she could be again united to her beloved son, and here be commended amongst women: and further advised her to return immediately into the city to her husband.

This however she positively refused to do, saying, she would die there, where she then was.

Esdras again expostulated with her, but it came to pass that whilst he was yet talking to her, he looked on her face, when suddenly it shone exceedingly bright, and her countenance glittered, so that he was afraid of her, and wondered what she might be. “And suddenly she made a great cry, very fearful, so that the earth shook at the noise of the woman.” And looking again, the woman had vanished, but a large city stood on the spot where he had seen and conversed with her, complete from its foundations.

Terrified and astonished, Esdras prayed for the support of God, and for wisdom to comprehend the mystery which he had witnessed, which was thus expounded to him : he was visited by the angel Uriel, who was permitted by God to instruct him, and he informed him, that the form of the vision he had seen under the appearance of a woman mourning for her only son, was to represent the City of Sion ; that for thirty years there had been no offerings made there, which explained her saying she had been that length of time constantly praying for a son ; after that time Solomon built the city and offered offerings ; that was the son she said was then born, and the account she gave of the untimely death of her son, was explained



by the destruction that came upon Jerusalem ; and the Angel further said, that for the faithfulness of his heart, it had been the will of the Almighty to shew him the “ brightness of her glory, and the comeliness of her beauty,” and that therefore he had been commanded to go into a field where there was no buildings, that he might see the greatness and beauty of the city, as much as his eyes were capable of seeing, and to hear as much as his ears could comprehend.

Esdras was greatly consoled by the mercy and goodness of God towards him, and slept that night in the same field as he was commanded to do.

THE HISTORY OF TOBIT.

Tobit, the subject of this history, was a descendant from the tribe of Nephthali, and was one of those persons who were carried away captive by Enemessan, king of the Assyrians, from Nephthali in Galilee, the place of his inheritance and residence.

Tobit from his youth had been a man of the most exemplary piety and goodness of heart ; and

had attended strictly to every minutia of the religion of his forefathers, as commanded by Moses ; both before his captivity, and ever after that misfortune, as well as the nature of his situation would allow. But above all was he memorable, for his humane and charitable disposition, and for the alms which he distributed amongst his fellow captives, and those requiring his friendly assistance. His observance of the ceremonies of his religion were the more extraordinary, as nearly all the rest of the captives, and even his own brethren of his father's house, had sacrificed unto the heifer Baal. But Tobit alone, of all his family, preserved his mind pure and free from idolatory, and invariably followed the commands of God ; and for this propriety of conduct, and his regular discharge of his duties to his Creator, he was indebted to the good counsel and excellent instructions of his father's mother Debora, who had carefully brought him up from infancy, he having been left an orphan to her care and management, and faithfully had she discharged the duty of a parent to him, by the attention she had paid to make him a good and pious man.

When arrived at manhood, he married a woman named Anna, of his own kindred, and had one child only, a son called Tobias ; he was thus happily circumstanced, when by the chance of war, he

and all his country became captive to the king of Assyria, who carried them all to Nineve. When arrived at this place of their destination, all his brethren and friends eat without the least restraint with the Gentiles of whatever was offered them, not appearing in the least to regret or regard it as a misfortune. But Tobit, regular, correct, and just in all his actions, could not bring himself to do any thing contrary to the precepts which had been early instilled into his heart and mind by his prudent grandmother; and therefore abstained from every improper indulgence of appetite, but with all this, his behaviour was ever gentle and modest, and he was regarded and highly spoken of by all, so much so, that in consequence of the propriety of his manners and unassuming humility, he attracted the observation of king Enemessar, who thereupon gave him great encouragement; and God giving a blessing to Tobit, he found favor in the eyes of that prince, and so well did he think of him, that although a captive in a strange land, he appointed him to be his purveyor.

Soon after this honourable appointment, Tobit went into Media, and there left in trust with Gabeel, the brother of Gabrias, at Mages, a city of Media, ten talents of silver. After the death of Enemessar, his son Sennacherib succeeded him in the kingdom, and during his reign, so violent a

civil commotion prevailed throughout the whole of his dominions; and it became so dangerous to travel, that Tobit was afraid to undertake it, and therefore the ten talents of silver remained unclaimed by him in the hands of Gabael of Media.

During this period of public disturbance, Tobit continued his charitable and benevolent custom of “giving alms to his brethren, bread to the hungry, and clothes to the naked; and if he saw any of his nation dead, and cast about the walls of Nineve, he instantly buried him.”—“Or if king Sennacherib had slain any (for in his wrath he killed many) he buried them, so that when the king had them sought for, the bodies could not be found.”—But these humane practices could not long be continued contrary to the will of an arbitrary tyrant, undiscovered. A Ninevite (most likely to ingratiate himself with Sennacherib) made known to him that Tobit was the person who buried all his countrymen, whose bodies he found exposed. The king was so extremely enraged against Tobit, when he heard this report, that he gave orders for him to be put to death; but he was so fortunate as to hide himself so securely as to elude the observation of his pursuers, and to withdraw himself and family from Nineve, but could by no means prevent the persecution that followed, when every

thing he possessed was forcibly seized, and confiscated to the king's use.

Thus was this good man deprived of all he was worth, and reduced nearly to beggary, and nothing was left to him but his amiable wife Anna, and his beloved son Tobias.

But the fluctuation of human affairs, and the instability of power, cannot be better exemplified than in the events recorded in the life of Tobit. For Sennacherib the king had scarcely been exercising this tyrannic and cruel authority over his people fifty-five days, before he was assassinated by two of his own sons ; who immediately fled after having committed the horrid deed, into the mountains of Arrarath ; and Sarchedonus his son succeeded him. And it so occurred that this king (Sarchedonus) appointed to superintend all his accounts, and over all his affairs, Achiacharus, the son of Tobit's brother Anael ; and this nephew of Tobit's being placed in so important a situation, and in great favor with the king, he ventured to entreat him on behalf of his uncle Tobit, and was so successful in his solicitation, that Sarchedonus not only pardoned him, but restored him again to his former situation on his return to Nineve ; and now again taken into the king's favor, he was also made his cup-bearer, keeper of the signet, and steward, and overseer of all the accounts, and

he was next in rank to Archiacharus, (his dutiful and affectionate nephew), who had so happily effected the restoration of Tobit to wealth and honour.

When Tobit was again established in his home, together with his wife and his son, he determined to keep the feast of the Penticost, with peculiar comfort and pleasure ; and Anna his wife knowing this his intention, provided an excellent entertainment on the occasion. But when Tobit had sat down to his table, and observed the abundance with which it was spread for his gratification, he desired Tobias to go out, and bring back with him whatever poor man he might meet with, (of their own people), to partake of the overplus, and that he would wait his return to dinner. But Tobias almost instantly came back to acquaint his father, that he had seen a man of his nation, who had been strangled, and was lying in the market-place.

According to the usual custom of Tobit, he immediately quitted the table, before he had tasted any thing that was on it, and took the body, and concealed it in his house, until the proper hour for its interment ; and then sat down in great heaviness and affliction to his repast. When the sun went down, Tobit made a grave, and buried the man.

His neighbours discovering how he had been employed, were amazed that he had courage to persevere in so dangerous a practice, and one which had caused him such severe trouble, and they ridiculed him for it greatly. But the worthy man, unmoved by their reproaches, performed the last office of humanity to his murdered countryman, and thus being polluted (by the Jewish law) he could not enter his house that night, but lay down by the wall and fell asleep. Birds had built in the wall, of which Tobit was unconscious, and as he slept, dirt came from them, which falling into his eyes, caused a disorder to come into them, which the physicians could not cure, and from which Tobit became totally blind, and consequently unable to perform the duties of his office, and by that means again became oppressed by poverty, although his good nephew Achiacharus did every thing he could to comfort and support him in this affliction; until not liking to remain any longer where he then resided, and also to conceal his distress, he removed to another city called Elymais; and there his wife Anna, took in needle work, to support the family, compelled so to do by the trouble which had befallen them.

The industry and attention of Anna was such, that those who employed her, were so perfectly well satisfied with her work, that in addition to

the price agreed on between them, they gave her a kid. When her husband heard the cry of the kid, he was astonished at it, and eagerly enquired how it came there? upon which his wife informed him, it had been given her in overplus of payment; but Tobit doubting this, was very unhappy, fearing it had been stolen, and therefore earnestly entreated her to restore it to the owner, and not to practice any dishonesty. This conversation so much offended Anna, that she reproached him severely, with many reflexions on his former charities and alms-giving. And Tobit was so much hurt and grieved at what she had with such cruelty said, that he went away and wept, and prayed earnestly to God, to release him by death from his present miseries.

By a wonderful coincidence, it so happened, that on the same day that Tobit and Anna had had this disagreement, Sara, the daughter of Raguel, a person of much consequence in Ecbatane, a city of Media, was afflicted in much the same manner, by the insolence of her maid servants, as Tobit had been by the unkind words of Anna. This Sara had been most unfortunate, for she had been given in marriage to seven young men, and each one, as soon as the marriage ceremony was completed, had suddenly dropped down and died,

which great misfortune was attributed to the influence of an evil spirit, named Asmodeus. And on this very memorable day, Sara having been offended with her maidens, beat them, when being very refractory, and resenting this treatment from their mistress in the most provoking manner, they insulted her upon this painful subject, accusing her of having strangled her seven husbands, and adding that they hoped she would soon follow them in the same manner.

Overcome by this behaviour of her servants, Sara retired into her chamber, with an intention to destroy herself; but recollecting the wickedness of such an action, and the reproach it would bring upon her father's house, as she was his only child, she conquered the evil suggestion, and falling on her knees, supplicated the mercy and assistance of God.

“ So the prayers of them both were heard before the majesty of the great God.”

And the Angel Raphael was sent by God to heal and comfort both; to restore sight to Tobit, and to remove the sorrow of Sara; “ and at the self-same moment that Tobit came home, Sara descended from her upper chamber.”

No sooner had Tobit again entered his house, when he suddenly recollect ed the ten talents of

silver, which he had deposited so long ago in the hands of Gabael, and thought (as he had prayed for death), that it would be proper to make his son acquainted with this important circumstance ; calling him therefore to him, he began by giving him the most excellent advice, as to his conduct in life, recommending to him the practice of charity, humility, honesty, sobriety, and justice, attention to the commands of his Creator, and never to marry any but from amongst his own nation and kindred ; he then informed him respecting the money, and expressed his wish that Tobias should go and demand it.

Tobias, after promising his father strictly to attend to his precepts, and in every thing to be guided by his counsel, said that he was willing to go wherever he ordered him, but as he was a perfect stranger to Gabael, of Rages, it could not be expected that he would pay him so large a sum ? To this his father replied, that he would give him the written acknowledgment of his friend, to shew to him ; and that he must immediately seek out a person who knew the way, to go with him, for which service he would pay whatever was demanded. Tobias then went out to endeavour to find such a person as his father had described, when he was met by the Angel Raphael, disguised in a manner to suit the purpose intended. When asked by Tobias the necessary questions, he

informed him that he knew the way well to Rages, and readily undertook to be his guide, adding that he well knew Gabael also, and would conduct him to his residence.

Tobias, delighted with his success, went in great haste to communicate the good news to his father, who (with a parent's natural anxiety), desired his son to bring the man to him, that he might question him further, respecting his family and connexions, to find out, whether or no, he was a trusty and fit person to permit his son to travel with ; Tobias then introduced the celestial guide, (though unknown but as a common man), and when Tobit asked him to what tribe he belonged ? he answered, " To whom doest thou seek for, a tribe or family, or an hired man to go with thy son ?" Tobit replied, it was a necessary caution, and that he requested to know his name and family. He then told Tobit, his name was Azarias, and told him the particulars of his connexions, with which Tobit was highly pleased, welcomed him most kindly to his house, said he knew all his relations well, and that he was of a good stock, requested he would not be offended at the questions he had put to him in his care for his son, and congratulated himself and Tobias, that he had met with a man of so worthy a family, to conduct him and be his companion.

He then settled with him for the sum he was to give him for this service, and promised, if he brought his son safe back, to add something to it; Tobias was quickly now prepared for his journey, and Tobit took leave of him, blessing him, and praying for the protection of God and his Angels for him on the way; so they both went out, and Tobias's "dog followed them."

But his mother was greatly distressed at this, (their first) separation; she wept abundantly, and said it would have been better for the money to have been lost, as they had quite enough, than risk the danger of sending their son away, who was their only solace. But Tobit comforted her with the assurance that they should soon meet again, that his faith in God supported him, and he knew he would shortly return safe and well; and with this pleasing hope and confidence, Anna ceased to weep, and made her mind content.

In the mean time, the Angel and Tobias were travelling and conversing cheerfully together, till they came to the river Tigris, where they lodged, and Tobias going down to bathe in the river, a monstrous fish leaped at him, and would have devoured him, had it not been for his heavenly companion; but in its fury, having cast itself upon the land, the Angel bid him take hold

of it, and open it, and take from it the heart, the liver, and the gall, and to put them up, and preserve them carefully. After this they roasted part of the fish, and having partaken of it, they again proceeded on their way, till they came near to Ecbatane. As they went along, Tobias became curious to know of what use the heart, liver, and gall of the fish could be, and desired his companion to inform him, to which the Angel replied, that the heart and liver of the fish, if burnt before any person troubled with an evil spirit, the smoke would drive that demon away, and the person would be no longer tormented, and that the gall would cure blindness, and cause the whiteness in the eyes to be perfectly healed.

By this time, approaching near to Rages, the Angel told Tobias, it was his intention to lodge that night with his cousin Raguel, and further said, that he had an only daughter, whose name was Sara, whom he would introduce him to, in hopes she might become his wife, as she was of his own tribe, and one that his parents would highly approve. The young man answered the Angel, "I have heard, brother Azarias, of this maid," and of the dreadful fate which has attended on seven young men to whom she has been given in marriage, adding, that he should be very unwilling to enter into such a dangerous engagement, on account of

his beloved parents, for being an only child, should they lose him, he was assured it would break their hearts.

The Angel, however, continued the subject, stating more particularly that she must be his wife, by right of inheritance, and not to be alarmed at the account of the evil spirit, which had caused the destruction of the other young men, for that the heart and liver of the fish, if laid upon the ashes of perfume, burnt in the bridal chamber, would drive that evil spirit for ever away. He then reminded him of the promise which he had made to his father, to take a wife of his own kindred, assured him that no other could be so proper for him to espouse, and not to concern himself further about the evil spirit, which would most certainly be overcome ; and that he knew, that even that night, Sara would be given to him in marriage, and that, when from the preparation made, the spirit should depart without doing injury to either, that both himself and Sara, should pray to God and return him thanks, who had shown mercy and pity towards them. “ Tobias was greatly interested by this account, and already began to think that he loved Sara, and that his heart was effectually joined to her.”

When the travellers had arrived at Ecbatane and come to the house of Raguel, Sara met them

and conducted them into the presence of her father and mother, when Raguel instantly remarked to Edna his wife, how extremely like that young man was to his most worthy friend and cousin Tobit, which his wife having also observed ; he said to them, “ From whence came you, brethren ? and being answered that they were sons of Nephalim, captives in Nineva ; he immediately enquired if he knew his kinsman Tobit, and if they did, whether he yet lived, and was in good health : he was informed that Tobit was alive and well, and that the young man there present was his only son. Delighted by this intelligence, Raguel leaped up, kissed Tobias most affectionately, and wept, then blessed him, and said he was the son of an honest and good man ; but when he further understood that Tobit was blind, he was very sorrowful, and wept much : Edna and Sara wept also.

But conquering this unavailing sorrow, they began to make preparation for the entertainment of this welcome guest, and quickly a sumptuous and abundant table was spread for them.

But Tobias's mind was much more occupied in reflexions on the conversation which had passed between his companion and himself on their journey, and in observing the modesty and beauty of the fair Sara, than attracted by hunger to the feast that awaited him ; and anxious to bring the affair

to a speedy conclusion, he said to Raphael, " Brother Azarias, speak of those things of which thou didst talk in the way, and let this business be dispatched ;" upon this request, Raphael communicated to Raguel the plan they had been arranging for the union of Sara and Tobias.

But Raguel in answer, entreated that they would eat, drink, and be merry, and after that they would talk the matter over ; but Tobias solemnly protested he would neither eat or drink, until they had agreed and sworn to each other. Raguel then said he should be most happy to give his daughter to Tobias, and with her to bestow on him half of whatever he possessed, but that nevertheless, he could not give consent until Tobias knew the whole truth. He then recounted to him the tragical death of the seven preceding husbands, destroyed through the malice of the evil spirit, who loved Sara, and through jealousy caused them to die. But finding Tobias unintimidated by this dreadful statement, " Raguel said, then take her hence, for thou art her cousin, and she is thine, and the merciful God give you success in all things."

He then called for his daughter, and taking her hand, gave her to Tobias, for his wife, and blessed them ; her mother Edna also joined in the written covenant, and sealed it ; after which they sat down

to their entertainment. But when Edna found her daughter overpowered with terror, when she called to mind her former trouble, she said to her, “Be of good comfort my daughter, the Lord of Heaven give thee joy for this thy sorrow; be of good comfort my daughter.”

Tobias was not forgetful of the instructions given him by his companion, and when he retired to his chamber, he took the ashes of the perfumes, and put the heart and liver of the fish upon them; which when smelt by the evil Asmodeus, he fled into the uttermost parts of Egypt, and the Angel bound him.—Then likewise Tobias remembered the further advice he had received, and both he and his wife joined in fervent thanks to God for this great deliverance.

All remained quiet that night, for the evil spirit which had caused such sorrow, was subdued—when Raguel arose early in the morning, she went and dug a grave, and then begged of Edna to send one of the maids to make enquiry, that if Tobias was dead, he might be buried without its being known to any. But what could equal his joy, when the maid brought intelligence that Tobias was alive. In the warm gratitude of his heart, he made his acknowledgements to God for his mercy and goodness, and joyfully filled up the grave which he had dug in secret sorrow.

The house now resounded with joy and gladness, and he kept the wedding feast for fourteen days; for before the rejoicings were near an end, Raguel had made Tobias take an oath that he should not attempt to depart before the fourteen days entertainment were expired, and when that was accomplished, that he should take his wife and half his goods, and go in safety to his father; and that after his and his wife's death, he should have the remainder of whatever he was possessed of. And to this arrangement Tobias had consented.

But in the midst of all this unexpected happiness and prosperity, Tobias, like an affectionate and dutiful son, could not be insensible to the great anxiety which his parents must suffer on his account; he had no means of sending intelligence to them, and he was bound by his oath, (and also by inclination) to remain where he was for a certain time. However to expedite the business as much as possible, he determined to send Azarias forward to Rages to collect the money and come back to him, to prevent the delay of his going after his time was up at Ecbatane, calling to him therefore his faithful friend and companion, (little conjecturing that it was to the Angel Raphael he gave orders) thus said to him: "Brother Azarias, take with thee two camels and a servant, (so

greatly now was the circumstances of Tobias improved) and go to Gabael, and bring me back the money, and bring him also to my wedding."

And he begged him to make haste, as he knew his father counted the days till his return.—And Raphael set out and arrived at Rages—shewed Gabael his hand writing; and Gabael immediately brought out the bags of money, sealed up, and delivered them up to the messenger. And early the next morning Gabael set out with him, to celebrate the nuptials of Tobias and Sara, and to bless and congratulate them on the occasion.

But Tobit, the disconsolate father, who was (as yet) unacquainted with the events which had taken place, was wretched from the continued absence of his beloved Tobias; but he made excuses for it, by saying that perhaps Gabael was dead, or they were detained by some event which prevented his being able to get the money, and many things of that nature to reconcile the delay.—But his mother in her grief, could conceive nothing but death could have prevented his return, and she mourned and lamented for him as dead, although Tobit was always endeavouring to persuade her he was safe. And she went every day to watch on the road by which he was to come back; and she wept and fasted in sorrow and despair.

The fourteen days (which Raguel had made

Tobias swear that he would pass with him) being now expired, the amiable Tobias became exceedingly importunate to depart, well knowing how wretched his parents would be made by his absence. But Raguel appeared to be as unwilling to part with him now, as ever; and endeavoured all in his power to prevail with him to stay longer, and he would undertake to send to his father, to let him know all that had happened to prevent his return.

But no arguments could prevail upon the impatient Tobias to prolong his stay, and when Raguel perceived he was fully determined, “He arose, and gave him Sara his wife, and half his goods, servants, cattle, and money,”—And he blessed them, and gave advice to his daughter to honour her father and mother-in-law, as her own parents, and so to conduct herself that he might hear a good report of her; and ended his exhortation by saying, “The God of Heaven give you a prosperous journey, my children.”

Edna also, Sara’s mother, joined her benediction to that of her husband’s; and after soliciting the blessings of Heaven on them, she concluded by an entreaty to Tobias to love and protect her child, emphatically adding: “I commit my daughter unto thee, of special trust, therefore do not entreat her evil.”

Tobias then departed deeply impressed with gratitude to Raguel and Edna; and also full of thankfulness to God, for the blessing he had bestowed; and proceeded on his journey prosperously, his faithful dog also still attending his steps. But when they were come near to Nineve, Raphael called Tobias aside, and said he thought he had better hasten on before his wife and the rest of his train, to prepare his parents for their reception, and further advised him to take the gall of the fish with him. So Tobias and Raphael went forward, the dog also following.

His mother, as was her daily practice, was sitting anxiously watching the road, although nearly hopeless of ever beholding her dear son again. When, to her unspeakable joy, she at length espied him coming, attended as when he departed by his guide and his dog; and in rapture she exclaimed to the equally delighted father, "Behold thy son cometh, and the man that went with him."

As they went along, Raphael had told Tobias that he was sure his father would recover his sight, if he anointed his eyes with the gall; that the whiteness would then fall away, and he would again behold him.

By this time they were approached so near, that Anna ran out to meet them, and falling on the neck of her son, said "Seeing I have seen

thee my son, from henceforth I am content to die." —and they both wept.

The father in his extacy of joy likewise attempted to run to him; but from his want of sight, stumbled and fell down. Tobias instantly ran to his assistance, raised him up, and rubbed his eyes with the gall; when from their severe smarting he rubbed them very much, which occasioned the film which covered the sight to peel away, and his sight was completely restored; he again saw his beloved son, he fell upon his neck and wept; and returned his ardent thanks to God, for the great blessings he had received from his sight and his child, being both restored in the same moment. And they went in rejoicing.

Then Tobias recounted to his father all the extraordinary events which had happened to him during his stay in Media: of his marriage, his prosperity, and his receipt of the money from Gabael. But when Tobias spoke of his marriage, Tobit made haste to go out to meet his daughter-in-law, at the gate of Nineve, where he received her in the most affectionate manner, and conducted her to his own house; and presenting her to Anna, they both blessed and embraced her, and bid her welcome. "And there was joy amongst all the brethren that were in Nineve." "And Achiacharus, and Nasbus, his brother's son, came also."

“And Tobias’s wedding was kept for seven days with great joy.”

When these entertainments were concluded, Tobit called his son, and said to him, it was now time to settle their account with Azarias, and to give him such an overplus, as his extraordinary services demanded. To which Tobias enthusiastically replied ; “ O father it is no harm to me to give him half of those things which I have brought ; for hath he not brought me again to thee in safety, rescued my wife from the power of an evil spirit, brought me the money, and likewise healed thee.”

No language could do such justice to the good and grateful feelings of the heart of Tobias as his own, and therefore in his own words are they here expressed. And so powerfully did they convince his father of their propriety, that he immediately answered, “ It is due unto him.” And thereupon calling the Angel, they requested him to take the half of their possessions, and go away in safety. Then Raphael taking them apart, said to them, “ It is good to keep close the secrets of a king, but honourable to reveal the works of God.” He then explained to them, that he was an Angel of God, on which being both amazed and terrified, they fell upon their faces ; but Raphael told them not to fear, that their prayers had been rendered acceptable to the Most High. That when both

Tobit and Sara prayed in the same moment, their prayers were heard; that when he left his dinner to bury the dead, that he was then with him, and in all that had happened to him by the command of God, he had ever invisibly attended him, and that though he had been so many days with them, he had neither eaten or drank—they having been deceived in vision when they thought he had. He further admonished them to persevere in the same upright way they had hitherto done—to give the praise to God for all his mercies; and to write a book of all the wonders which had occurred to them. Saying this he vanished from their presence, “and when they arose they saw him no more.” “By which they were assured that he was an Angel of the Lord’s.”

Tobit lived after this to see six sons of Tobias’s, and finding his life drawing near its close, he admonished his son to remove himself and his family from Nineve, as he fully believed what the prophet Jonas had denounced against it, concerning its overthrow; and advised him to fix his residence in Media, which would for a time enjoy peace. After this, giving him strict charge respecting his religious duties, Tobit expired, being an hundred and fifty-eight years old, and he buried him honorably. And when his mother died, he buried her with his father After which, Tobias, with his

wife and children, departed to Ecbatane, to Raguel his father-in-law.

“Where he became old with honor, and he buried his father and mother-in-law honorably, and he inherited their substance, and his father Tobit’s.”

“And he died at Ecbatane, in Media, being an hundred and twenty-seven years old.”

THE HISTORY OF JUDITH.

At the same time that Nebuchodonosor reigned over the great city of Nineve, Arphaxad was king over the Medes, in Ecbatane, who fearful of his hostile neighbour, fortified the city in a manner the most wonderful that had ever been known; the strength, height, and breadth of the walls which encompassed the city, the massy gates, and the whole of the works made for the protection of Ecbatane, exceeded every thing of the kind at that day seen or known of.

But notwithstanding all these necessary precautions, Nebuchodonosor made war upon him,

and although he had collected all the allies that he could possibly claim assistance from, and done whatever the art of man, guided by prudence, could suggest, yet were they greatly inferior to the power which was to be brought against them. In the mean time the king of Assyria, had sent Ambassadors to all his tributary princes and states, to hold themselves in readiness to assist him in his wars. But conceiving themselves sufficiently powerful to withstand his arbitrary demand, they treated it contemptuously, and sent away his Ambassadors without giving assent to what the king had ordered. This disappointment and disrespect of his commands, irritated beyond all bounds his naturally violent disposition, and he swore by his throne and kingdom, that he would be amply revenged on these rebellious states the moment he had overcome Arphaxad, king of Media, and that every man amongst them should then be put to the sword.

He then marched in “battle array” against the devoted city of Ecbatane, with all his desolating power, and soon overpowered the force of Aaphaxad, destroying all his fine army, his horses, and his chariots; the city also was taken, and its grand fortification demolished, with every work of art and beauty, “Turning all the beauty thereof (as the scripture expresses it) into shame.” Not content

with all this havock, the merciless tyrant pursued Arphaxad into the mountains, where he had fled for refuge, and finding him, put him cruelly to death.

After accomplishing these works of devastation, he and his victorious army, and all the multitude which followed his fortunes, banqueted and rested for a time from the fatigues and toils of war. When Nabuchodonosor recollecting his solemn vow of revenge against the refractory nations, determined to put it into immediate execution. To this end, he called together all his principal officers and nobles, with whom he held a secret counsel, in which the king of Assyria made a decree, that he would send and destroy all mankind then on the earth; except they consented to acknowledge and obey him as the supreme ruler of the universe. His councellors and nobles concurring in the propriety of this measure, he next ordered that Holofernes, the chief general of his army, and next in command to himself, should be called into his presence; and then gave him instructions to go forth, and carry fire and sword wherever he came, to let his eye have no pity, and to spare none, of whatever state or condition, except they complied with the proposed terms of owning no other lord but him; for that whatever he had threatened against any nation, he would most assuredly now perform.

Holofernes, who was a man, as implacable and unfeeling as the king himself was, whom he served, found no difficulty in engaging to obey these sanguinary commands ; and he collected his army together without delay, which, when all mustered, amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand, and twelve thousand archers on horseback, which, together with their camels, asses, carriages, sheep, and goats, without number, must have contained as formidable a combination as can well be imagined. Wherever he went (as may well be conjectured), slaughter and death, and misery followed, (called victory), and unutterable terror and distress fell upon the wretched inhabitants of every city, or state, who heard the name of Holofernes, or that his deluge of destruction was approaching their country. In this dreadful emergency the principal people of each state consulting together of what was best to be done, were unanimously of opinion, that to preserve the lives of their wives and children, to save their country and themselves, it were best to submit to the terms proposed, and become the tributary dependants on the caprice of a despotic tyrant, rather than risk the chance of war, against a power so prodigious. This being arranged, each person sent in to Holofernes's camp their written decision, of future submission to the King of Assyria, and

their readiness to comply with his commands. But though this was accepted, and the effusion of blood spared, yet Holofernes gave orders for all their fortifications to be destroyed, pulled down all their groves, and after many other such injuries, set his own spies over all their actions.

This done, he came near to Judea, and pitched his tents near it, and here he continued inactive for a month, until he had collected, for the use of his army, whatever further he had occasion for.

The children of Israel, who dwelt in Judea, had frequently heard of Holofernes, for the fame of his transactions, his cruelties, and his injustice, even to those nations who were spared, had spread far and wide amongst all people, but more particularly was the dread of the Jews excited by Holofernes's approach, from their apprehension for the temple of their God, and for the City of Jerusalem; for being but lately returned from the horrors of captivity, and all their ancient customs so short a time again restored to them, they became more fearful of being again deprived of them, and more solicitous to preserve those blessings than ever. They therefore sent to every ally they had for succour, in this their extremity, and in the mean time, they possessed themselves of the tops of the high mountains, this being of the utmost importance to them, and fortified all the villages that were in them, and there laying

up in store all the provisions they possibly could spare, and in all things preparing themselves, as well at might be, to repel the common enemy of mankind, the cruel General of the despotic King of Assyria.

The High Priest Joachim also wrote to every one to whom it was proper, in Bethulia, to charge them to keep the passages of the hill country, for by them, there was an entrance into Judea; but it was easy to stop any that attempted to come up, because the passage would scarcely allow two men abreast to advance; it was so narrow, therefore that the progress of enemies might be prevented with but little difficulty. After these indispensable arrangements, the whole of the people joined in supplication to God for assistance and protection in their hour of danger, and trusting in his great mercy; and having done all that human foresight could suggest for security and defence, they rested quietly, awaiting the result.

But no words can describe the astonishment of Holofernes, when he heard it reported, that the inhabitants of Judea intended to resist him; he could not at first give credit to it, and when he found the news to be true, he was utterly at a loss to account for their rashness and temerity, and his rage and anger were almost ungovernable, to find that there should be a people on the face

of the earth, who dared to resist his power, to disobey his commands, or contend against him. And he immediately called together all the chief men of the neighbouring conquered countries, who were then in his camp, to question them concerning this extraordinary and courageous people. And when assembled, he said to them, “Who are these people that dwelleth in the hill country? and what are the cities that they inhabit? What is the multitude of their army, and wherein is their power and strength? What King is set over them, or captain of their army? and why have they determined not to come and meet me, more than all the inhabitants of the west?”

Achior, the captain of the sons of Ammon, undertook to answer this enquiry of Holofernes's, and in his description of the Jews, gave their whole history, with such eloquence and truth, that it could not be abbreviated without great injury to its beauty; it is therefore put here in his own words, which must meet the admiration of every reader of reflexion and taste.

“And Achior said, let my lord now hear a word from the mouth of thy servant, and I will declare unto thee the truth concerning these people, which dwelleth near thee, and inhabit the hill countries; and there shall be no lie come out of the mouth of thy servant.”

“ This people are descended of the Chaldeans, and they sojourned hitherto in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, which were in the land of Chaldea.”

“ For they left the ways of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of Heaven, the God whom they knew ; so they cast them out from the face of their Gods, and they fled into Mesopotamia, and sojourned there many days.”

“ And their God commanded them to depart from the place where they sojourned, and to go into the land of Canaan, where they dwelt, and were encreased with gold and silver, and very much cattle.”

“ But when a famine covered all the land of Canaan, they went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, while they were nourished, and became there a great multitude, so that one could not number their nation.”

“ Therefore the Kings of Egypt rose up against them, and dealt subtilly with them, and brought them low with labouring in bricks, and made them slaves.”

“ Then they cried unto their God, and he smote all the land of Egypt with incurable plagues, so the Egyptians cast them out of their sight.”

“ And God dried the Red Sea before them.”

“ And brought them to Mount Sina and Cades

Barne, and cast forth all that dwelt in the wilderness."

" So they dwelt in the land of the Ammonites, and they destroyed by their strength, all them of Escbon, and passing over Jordon, they possessed all the hill country."

" And whilst they sinned not before their God, they prospered, because the God that hated iniquity was with them."

" But when they departed from the way which he appointed them, they were destroyed in many battles very sore, and were led captives into a land that was not theirs, and the temple of their God was cast to the ground, and their cities were taken by the enemies."

" But now they are returned to their God, and are come up from the places where they were scattered, and have possessed Jerusalem, where their sanctuary is, and are seated in the hill country, for it was desolate."

" Now therefore, my Lord and Governor, if there be any error in this people, and they sin against their God, let us consider that this shall be their ruin, and let us go up, and we shall overcome them."

" But if there be no iniquity in their nation, let my lord now pass by, lest their Lord defend them,

and their God be for them, and we become a reproach before the world."

Achior having finished this harangue, there was a general murmur of discontent throughout the whole assembly collected near Holofernes, all exclaiming with one voice against Achior, for the account he had given of the people of the hill country, and expressing, with vehemence, their strong desire to be led against them, convinced they could not withstand their force for one day.

As soon as the tumult occasioned by this discourse of Achior's, was a little subsided, Holofernes rose up in extreme displeasure, to express his sentiments also on this occasion, against the unfortunate captain of the Ammonites. "And who art thou Achior, and the hirelings of Ephraim," (he said in a voice of anger, which made all tremble who heard it), "that thou hast prophesied this day amongst us, not to make war with the people of Israel, because their God will defend them?" And who is God but Nebuchodonosor? Then with the most tremendous threats of what destruction he would bring on this devoted people, and telling him, that he should see his face no more until he had executed this vengeance, and that then he should be put to death, and fall amongst their slain. He ordered his attendants to take Achior to Bethulia, and deliver him up to

the people of Israel; the servants who waited in his tent instantly obeyed him, and brought Achior near to the fountains which were under Bethulia, but being observed approaching by the inhabitants of Bethulia, the men of the city prevented the enemy coming any nearer, by the use of their slings; nevertheless the servants of Holofernes contrived to bind Achior, and cast him down at the foot of the hill, where they left him to his fate, and returned to their lord. Whilst the Israelites observing from their station, that a man was left bound in a cruel manner, whose situation must be dreadful, some of them descended, released Achior from his bonds, and presented him to the governors of the city.

The news of Achior having been thus rescued from the power of Holofernes, soon collected together great numbers of people, of all degrees and ages, to hear what could have occasioned him to receive such ill treatment from that commander; when he recounted to them all which had taken place, and what he had said concerning them, that had given such offence to Holofernes, and who had in consequence condemned him to a lingering and cruel death. He then made known to them, the declaration of Holofernes against them, the threats he made use of for their overthrow, and added every information he could, respecting the

magnitude of his army, his power, and his ferocity. Which, when all the people heard, they were greatly alarmed, but confiding in the mercy of God, they all joined in prayer to him, for his compassion on their distress, to bring down the pride of the boaster, and protect them from his power. After this, their spirits revived, they comforted and commended Achior, and one of the governors took him to his own house, and made a feast for him, to which he invited all the elders and principal people, and after it was over, they again all offered up their prayers to the Almighty for his help and protection.

The next day Holofernes gave orders for his camp to be removed, and placed before Bethulia, being fully determined to make war against the children of Israel without further delay. The army was now greatly augmented, (though so prodigious at first), from the various nations who had either been conquered, or through fear had submitted to the power and dominion of Nebuchodonosor; all these, together with the necessary attendants and followers, had become so numerous, that they now could scarcely be calculated, so as to speak with certainty as to their amount. This multitude encamped near Bethulia, and when the men of that city saw them spreading over such an

immense tract of country, their hearts failed them, and they gave themselves over for lost.

The second day Holofernes exercised all his horsemen in sight of these poor people, for the purpose of striking further terror in their hearts, and carefully examined all the passages that led up to the city, and came at last to their fountains of water, and set a garrison of men of war over them, after which he retired to his tent. In the mean time these harrassed people were exerting themselves to the utmost, to meet, or rather counteract the threatened danger, but it appeared that every effort must prove in vain, for the next day some that were of the council of Holofernes advised him, that it were better, instead of attacking them in their city, which would be very hazardous, on account of the mountainous situation of it, to destroy them, without his losing the life of even one soldier, which might easily be effected by his keeping possession of the fountains, which was the only water to be procured by the inhabitants of Bethulia, and if deprived of that resource, all his opposers must either perish, or submit themselves to his pleasure, as life could not be long sustained without an ample supply of water.

This advice pleased Holofernes so much, that he immediately adopted it, and placed such a numerous guard of warriors about the fountains,

that all access to them by the besieged, was rendered totally impracticable. In this distress, in which the whole nation was involved, the hearts of the people sunk in hopeless despondency, and they began to think they had better submit, or be killed at once, by the unfeeling conqueror, than thus to see their families perishing by thirst ; and on this resolution gaining strength amongst them, they became exceedingly clamourous with their governors and priests, and principal people, instantly to surrender to Holofernes, and by that means to save the lives of their wives, their infants and themselves.

The rulers of the city were much grieved by this impatience of the people, they were also suffering under the same calamity, yet still had hope in the mercy of God. However the governors tried to comfort and raise the dejected spirits of the people, and earnestly entreated them to forbear the giving up their city, for five days longer, at the expiration of which time, if that God hath not sent them deliverance from their enemies, the resolution of the people should be no longer opposed. To this arrangement they reluctantly consented, and each one returned to his own habitation, though scarcely knowing how life would be sustained so long.

At this period there resided in Bethulia, a

woman of unexemplary piety and virtue, whose name was Judith, she was also uncommonly beautiful, and had great possessions, in silver and gold, in servants and cattle, in houses and lands. She had been a widow for three years, (at this time) her husband Manasses died suddenly, from the effect of the sun's rays having darted fiercely on his head, as he was giving orders to his work people in his harvest fields. Judith and her husband Manasses, having been most affectionately attached to each other, her affliction at the unexpected loss she thus sustained, was so great, that from the day of his death, (though she was very young), she had shut herself up from all society, devoting all her time to mourning and devotion, so much indeed, did she indulge in this unavailing sorrow, that she had a solitary tent pitched on her house top, as a retreat from all observation, and where she might, without fear of interruption, pass her melancholy hours. Here attired in habits of the deepest mourning a widow could assume, the beautiful Judith gave way to her grief, except on such days, as the duties of her religion obliged her to relinquish the severe fasts she imposed upon herself, by compelling her to attend the feasts and sabbaths appointed to be solemnly celebrated at the stated times.

But even in this solitude, the dreadful state the

city was in, could not remain unheard of by her, neither the desolating distress occasioned by the want of water, or the fatal intelligence of the resolution entered into, of surrendering Bethulia into the hands of the Assyrian general, if without assistance from Heaven in the course of the short space of time which had been specified. Shocked by the alarming intelligence which had reached her ear, she immediately sent her favorite and principal female servant, to request that the princes, governors, and elders would come to her house, which summon they instantly complied with, as they all entertained the highest opinion of the wisdom and discretion of Judith, and were anxious to hear whatever she might wish to communicate.

When they were introduced to her presence, she severely reprobated them, for appearing to doubt the power and mercy of God, by limiting the hope of his interference in their behalf, to a certain number of days; for even (she said), should he not do it in that time, he was yet able to save and defend them in the last extremities; and that it was wrong and sinful ever to despair, to remember always the temptations, sorrows, and trials their forefathers had endured, and in that recollection, to bear with patience and fortitude, whatever calamity the Almighty might judge proper to inflict.

To this the governors of the city answered, that they had been compelled by the grievous necessities of the people, and their pressing solicitations to act as they had done, and added, that as all then present, had before that day, known her to be a wise and discerning woman, they entreated she would advise them, (according to her judgment), how they should now act, in the embarrassing circumstances they were placed ?

To this Judith replied, that she had herself fixed upon a plan for the relief of this distressed city, which, should she be enabled to accomplish, the fame of it would continue for ever, throughout all generations. She would (she continued), that night go out of the gates of the city, attended only by her confidential maid, and within the time they had promised to the people, to deliver up Bethulia into the hands of Holofernes, she fully trusted that God would have pity on them, and by her means give them relief. But she requested that no one would require her to explain what it was her intention to attempt for their succour, for she should keep that a profound secret ; until what she then meditated, was fully and happily concluded.

To this encouraging speech of Judith's, the whole of the rulers replied, that they all had so much confidence in her wisdom, that whatever the enterprize might be which she was about to undertake, they felt assured they should approve ; they .

then took leave of Judith, and each returned to his own dwelling.

As soon as they were departed, Judith fell on her face, in ardent prayer for the blessing and assistance of God, on what she was about to engage in for the welfare of her people and her country. And then arose from her supplications with a cheerful countenance, and a heart lightened by hope; and calling her maid to her for aid, she put off the mourning garments of her widowhood, and after bathing and perfuming her clothes, (according to eastern fashion) "she braided her hair, and put a tire upon it, and put on her garments of gladness, wherewith she was clad in the life of Manassah her husband, and she put sandals upon her feet; and put about her, her bracelets, and her chains, and her rings, and all her ornaments."

And she gave her maid a bottle of wine, and a cruise of oil, and filled a bag with parched corn, and a lump of figs, and with fine bread; and so she folded all these things together, and gave them to the maid."

And when she came to the gate of the city, the chiefs of the people were already there, out of respect to her, to bid her farewell, and to pray for her safety and success. But when they saw her so much altered in her dress, they could not compre-

hend the meaning of it, though none presumed to question her concerning it; yet they wondered at it; but much more were they all surprised at her surpassing beauty, and filled with admiration of it: for it had been so long obscured in retirement, and concealed by widow's weeds, that it now appeared with peculiar advantage. She then desired that the gates might be opened for her, which request being complied with, Judith and her maid went forth; and the men of the city stood auxiously watching their departure, and observed them winding down the descent of the hill, till they reached the valley, and from there the eye could no longer trace their footsteps.

Judith and her faithful servant proceeded on their way, undismayed either by the intricacies or the roughness of the path by which they had to pass. For the heart and thoughts of this heroine were doubtless too much occupied by the still more alarming difficulties she had to encounter in her perilous enterprize; and the animating hope of finally rescuing her country from its impending dreadful fate, to pay much attention to the disagreeable road, which led to the scene of future action. And her companion (though she had no such great design in contemplation) gained courage from the example of her mistress, and reluctantly descended with her the nearly inaccess-

able mountain side which led to the valley, where the Assyrian army was encamped.

Every impediment which lay in the way of their journey being now overcome, they walked on till they arrived at the first watch of the Assyrians, who being surprized at seeing two unprotected females advancing towards him, hastily demanded the cause; saying, "Of what people art thou? whence comest thou? and whether goest thou? To this she answered, "I am a woman of the Hebrews, and am fled from them, and am coming before Holofernes the chief captain, to declare to him words of truth," &c. &c. That the intelligence she brought was of the utmost importance to him, and that she requested to be brought into his presence without delay. The men who had asked these questions, whilst listening to her replies, were struck with amaze at her uncommon beauty, and the manner in which she expressed herself; and greatly commended the resolution she had taken, and encouraged her with assurances of the protection of their captain; advising her also to speak with courage before him, what she had to impart, and to assure herself that no harm would happen to her. After this conversation had taken place, they chose out a guard of an hundred men, to conduct her to the tent of Holofernes.

As she proceeded a prodigious quantity of peo-

ple assembled about her, for the fame of her beauty, her extraordinary errand, and desertion of her country, spread through the camp with the utmost rapidity ; and by the time she and her maid had arrived before the tent of Holofernes, the concourse was immense; and in their discourse concerning her, they said to each other—“ Who would despise these people, who have amongst them such beautiful women ? it is not good that one man of them be left, who being let go, might deceive the whole earth.”

The officers and attendants who were near the person of the General, now gave him to understand what had occurred—that an Hebrew woman had come into the camp, entreating to be admitted to his presence, having matters to communicate worthy his attention. At this time Holofernes was “ resting upon his bed, under a canopy which was woven with purple and gold, and emeralds, and precious stones.”

But when he heard this account, he arose and went out from his tent, “ and lamps of silver were carried before him.”

“ And when Judith was come before him and his servants, they all marvelled at the beauty of her countenance, and she fell down upon her face, and did reverence unto him, and his servants took her up.”

When Judith was risen up from the respectful posture she had placed herself in, Holofernes requested she would not be alarmed, as he never did injury to those who submitted to his power; and that he never should have lifted a spear against her country, if they had not opposed him, and slighted his commands. But to assure herself that she should be free from any one offering her offence or harm, and to consider herself in every respect safe, whilst under the protection of king Nabuchodonosor.

The part Judith was now compelled to act for the preservation of her country, and of all the lives which were dear to her, was one of the most distressing that can be imagined. And nothing but that dreadful alternative could palliate the treacherous conduct she was from this hour of introduction obliged to adopt and continue towards Holofernes. Nothing less than the powerful motives which actuated Judith, can excuse the exercise of deceit and falsehood, even to the severest enemy or most wicked man.

Judith then humbly entreated Holofernes to listen to the instruction which she had come to give him, and she would put him in a way to conquer Bethulia, without the loss of even one life. For (she continued) Achior had told him the truth respecting her people, when he had said that they

never could be overcome, until they sinned against and provoked their God to wrath.—That was in truth the case, but that now necessity and famine would oblige them to act contrary to their law; for they were about to destroy for their own sustenance, the cattle set apart for sacrifices to God; which sin, whenever it was committed, would bring destruction upon them, and they would fall into his hands without the power of resistance. And she, well knowing this event must inevitably take place, had come to throw herself upon his mercy before it was too late.

She likewise added—that she herself being very religious, she must entreat (if he permitted her to remain in his camp) that she might be allowed to go out every night into the valley to pray, and to her it would there be revealed, when they had become guilty of that sin, which would occasion their being delivered into his hands; and then she herself would lead him in triumph through the midst of Judea.

When she had finished her discourse, Holofernes and all his people were as much charmed by her wisdom and eloquence, as they had been with her beauty; and said, “There is not such a woman from one end of the earth to the other, both for beauty of face and wisdom of words.” And Holofernes said to her, “And now thou are both

beautiful in thy countenance, and witty in thy words ; surely if thou do as thou hast spoken, thy God shall be my God, and thou shalt dwell in the house of king Nabuchodonosor, and shall be renowned through the whole earth."

Holofernes then gave command that Judith should be brought where his plate was set, and that she should be entertained at his own table, and also every attention and respect should be paid to her, and that she might partake of the wine and delicacies prepared for him ; but Judith with great modesty and caution, declined the honour of sitting at his board, giving as her reason, her fear of offending God, by partaking of what she was forbidden, but said provision should be made for her of the things that she had brought. Holofernes (at her request) consented to this arrangement, but said he was afraid that when her stock was expended, he should find great difficulty in providing for her, as none of her nation were with him ? To this Judith answered that she trusted in her God, even before the time that her provision should be exhausted, the thing she had determined upon, the Lord would accomplish by her hand.

Having conversed with him in this manner for some time, she retired to the tent prepared for her

repose ; when having slept till midnight, she arose and went forth to pray, attended by her servant ; having gained permission from Holofernes for that purpose, and a command given to the guard to let those females pass every night into the valley, to perform their devotions. And in this way did Judith pass three days in the Assyrian camp, going out each night (at midnight) according to the command which Holofernes had given to permit her, to his guards ; and had promised to herself she should ever have liberty to do, to perform her ablutions, and to pray to her God.

On the fourth day of her residence amongst them, Holofernes made a grand feast, to his own servants only, and called none of his officers to be present at it, and said to his principal attendant Bagoas, that he must go and invite Judith to it : adding that it would be wrong and even disgraceful to them, not to persuade her to partake of one entertainment with them, and therefore he gave instruction to Bagoas to persuade her to comply with this request, should she make objections to it. Bagoas delivered this message of his lord's, with many flattering compliments and entreaties of his own, to convince her of the necessity of her attendance, and the high honour of the invitation. But to his great surprize she instantly, and with great pleasure consented to accept it, and attend

on Holofernes, saying, “ Who am I now, that I should gainsay my lord ?—Surely whatever pleaseth him, I will do speedily, and it shall be my joy unto the day of my death.”

Then she arose and arrayed herself in the most magnificent manner, and her maid went to lay soft skins in the tent, and make great preparation for the reception of Judith there, with every attention to her ease and accommodation ; and when she arrived, Holofernes was even more than ever charmed with her grace, beauty, and modesty : and he entreated her to join them in their entertainment, to drink and be merry with them. To which she replied, “ I will drink now my lord, because my life is magnified in me this day, more than all the days since I was born.”—But that what she drank or eat, must still be what her maid had prepared for her. Holofernes, who had provided the most costly banquet, and had ordered every thing to be conducted with the most imposing ceremony and grandeur, was hurt that he could not prevail on the Hebrew woman to join with them, but he urged her no further on the subject, and sat down with his companions to enjoy those dainties, which Judith so perseveringly refused. But it was a delight to him that she was present at the feast, and inspired with unusual joy and gladness by her society and kindness, he gave

way to the cheerfulness of his heart, and drank more wine at this (to him fatal) banquet, than ever he had done before in any one day in his whole life. The consequence may easily be conjectured, his senses became overpowered by the potent effect of the wine, and throwing himself upon his couch he fell into a deep sleep. Upon this his servants, already weary with the length of the entertainment, made haste to depart, closing the tent as they departed, and leaving Judith alone with Holofernes in it. But Judith had previously commanded her maid to wait, and be in readiness to attend her, as she should "go forth" as usual. And Bagaas had directed that she should remain at the door, to be at hand for her mistress when she required her service.

All the company and attendants having departed, and Judith only left in the tent with Holofernes, who still continued sleeping ; she felt the importance of the moment, and that the dangerous and critical time had arrived, in which (and in which only) the deliverance of her country and her people was to be effected. Approaching therefore the side of the bed on which the Assyrian general lay (insensible of his danger), she earnestly prayed to God for strength and power to execute her long intended purpose. When full of

confidence from her supplications, and feeling herself equal to the enterprize, she took the falchion* of Holofernes from the pillow of the bed, and saying “strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel, this day.” She struck twice upon his throat with all her might, and severed the head from the body. She then so managed as to conceal and bring it out with her, when she came to join her maid, who was still waiting the approach of her mistress.

As soon as they met, Judith put the head of Holofernes into the bag of provision which the maid always carried; and they both went out, according to their usual custom, unsuspected and unobstructed by any one. But the moment they passed in this fortunate manner, all the out posts and guards stationed about, they hastened with all possible expedition through the valley, and went up the mountain of Bathulia, and came to the gates of the city; and Judith, as soon as she could make herself heard, cried out to the watchmen at the gate, to open it immediately to admit her, for that she brought joyful tidings, and that God would yet spare Jerusalem.

When the men of the city found that Judith was returned, and that they heard her voice, they were on a sudden filled with hope and joy; and

* A sword of a peculiar make.

they came running towards her, and they called all the chief people together, and they crowded and ran from all quarters, both great and small, for her return filled them with wonder, and they instantly lighted a large fire, that by the light of it they might see and stand near her, to hear an account of her perilous adventures. Then in a loud voice Judith commanded them all to praise God for the deliverance, which he had brought about by her hand; and then to their astonished eyes, drew forth the head from the bag, and said, “Behold the head of Holofernes, the chief captain of the army of Assur : the Lord hath smitten him by the hand of a woman.”

Then all joined in solemn thanksgiving for this destruction of their greatest enemy, and next in praises of Judith, who had so imminently risked her life, for the preservation of Jerusalem, her temple, and her inhabitants. Judith then advised them (and all were attentive to her counsel) to take the head of Holofernes, and hang it on the highest place on their walls, and that as soon as morning dawned, every valiant man well armed, with a captain over them, should go out on the mountain and pretend to descend, but not to go down ;—this appearance (she said) would cause an alarm, and that they would run to the tent of their general for instructions how to act; when disco-

vering their loss, fear and dismay would fall upon them, and that then they would become an easy prey.

She requested however that before this was put in practice, they would call Achior to her, that he might be acquainted with the fate of him who despised the house of Israel. It was so that when Achior attended in consequence of Judith's wish to see him, and beheld so great a prodigy, as the head of Holofernes in the hand of a man, he was so much overpowered, he fainted away ; but soon recovering, he joined in admiration of the conduct of Judith, and earnestly solicited a recital of whatever had occurred to her since her residence in the Assyrian camp. To this she readily assented, "And declared unto him in the midst of the people, all that she had done, from the day she went forth, until that hour she spake unto them."

And when she had left off speaking, all the people shouted with a loud voice, and made a joyful noise in the city. And Achior was so convinced by all these wonderful events, of the truth and purity of the religion of the people of Judea, that he was joined with the house of Israel from that day.

The next morning the sun arose in all its glory, which the men of Bethulia no sooner perceived to dawn, than they took the head of Holofernes, and placed it in the most conspicuous place of the highest wall; and each valiant man taking his weapon, sallied out from the city, under the command of experienced captains.

When the Assyrians beheld this manœuvre, it caused a great commotion in the camp, it being totally unexpected, and they instantly came to the tent of their chief captain, to give him information of this strange event; and said to him 'who had the charge of all his things, "Waken now our lord, for the slaves have been bold to come down against us to battle."

But what language can express the consternation and distress of Bagoas, when he saw his lord cast dead upon the floor, and his head taken away from him.—He uttered a cry of the most agonizing sorrow, and instantly ran to the tent of Judith, and not finding her there, he leaped out to the people, and cried, "These slaves have dealt treacherously—one woman of the Hebrews hath wrought shame upon the house of king Nabuchodonosor; for behold Holofernes lieth dead upon the ground, without a head."

The confusion and dismay which this dreadful intelligence excited in the Assyrian armies is thus

powerfully expressed:—"When the captains of the Assyrian army heard these words, they rent their coats, and their minds were wonderfully troubled; and there was a great cry, and a very great noise throughout the camp." And as the news spread, terror and disorder took place; and each one began to desert, and fly the way he conceived most conducive to his own safety: totally regardless of the honour of his country, or his cause. And the children of Israel, inspired with confidence and courage, as their enemies lost it, and gave way to their fears, pursued the flying troops until they had driven them out of their country, and obtained a complete victory over that immense army.

And they took all the spoil, which was extremely rich; and the splendid tent of Holofernes, his canopy, embroidered with such valuable materials—the precious jewels, the plate, and the costly ornaments that were found belonging to the Assyrian general, were all presented to Judith; who took them, as they were meant, a kind token of respect and gratitude; but she immediately dedicated the whole to the Lord, in his temple at Jerusalem. And then after the general thanksgiving and praises to God, for this miraculous deliverance and victory was over; they held a feast for three months. "And all the women of Israel ran toge-

ther to see Judith, and blessed her, and made a dance amongst them for her, and she took branches in her hand, and gave also to the women that were with her."

"And they put a garland of olive upon her, and her maid that was with her, and she went before all the people in the dance, leading the women ; and all the men of Israel followed in their armour, with garlands, and with songs in their mouths."

After all these duties and rejoicings were over, every one returned to his own inheritance; and Judith remained in Bethulia, having great abundance of her own, in possessions of every kind, and requiring nothing more. "And was in her time honorable in all the country." And she continued in her widowhood ever after, though many desired her in marriage, but she constantly refused to consent ; and so continued ; "But she increased more and more in honour, and waxed old in her husband's house, being an hundred and five years old ; and she made her maid free. And she died in Bathulia ; and was buried in the sepulchre of Manasses, her husband."

"And the house of Israel lamented her seven days ; and before she died she did distribute her goods to all them that were nearest of kin to her husband, and to them that were the nearest of her kindred."

“And there was none that made the children of Israel any more afraid in the days of Judith—nor for a long time after her death.”

ECCLESIASTICUS.

(Before the Birth of our Saviour 200 Years.)

But a small portion from this book will be introduced here, as the whole contains such excellent advice and precept, that it is difficult to select extracts from it, or give one part a preference to the other, as all is so desirable. It is therefore particularly recommended for perusal; and the little specimens here brought before the reader, will give proof of the instruction, beauty of sentiment, and strength of reasoning, which will be found in those pages.

Of Honor and Respect to Parents.

“Hear me your father, O children, and do hereafter, that ye may be safe.”

“For the Lord hath given the father honor over his children, and hath confirmed the authority of the mother over her sons.”

“ Whoso honoreth his father, maketh an atonement for his sins.”

“ And he that honoreth his mother, is as one that layeth up treasure.”

“ Whoso honoreth his father, shall have joy of his own children, and when he maketh his prayer, it shall be heard.”

“ Honor thy father and mother both in word and deed, that a blessing may come upon thee, from them.”

On the Fear of the Lord.

“ The fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom.”

“ The fear of the Lord is honour, and glory, and gladness, and a crown of rejoicing.”

“ The fear of the Lord maketh a merry heart, and giveth joy and content, and a long life.”

“ Whoso feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at last ; and he shall find favor in the day of his death.”

On the Choice of Friends.

“ Instead of a friend be not an enemy, for thereby thou shalt inherit an ill name, shame, and

reproach; even so shall a sinner that hath a double tongue."

"Sweet language will multiply friends; and a fair speaking tongue, will encrease kind greetings."

"Be in peace with many, nevertheless have but one counsellor of a thousand."

"If thou wouldest get a friend, prove him first, and be not hasty to credit him."

"For some man is a friend to his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of thy trouble."

"And there is a friend, who being turned to enmity and strife, will discover thy reproach."

"Again some friend is a companion at the table, and will not continue in the day of thy affliction."

"But in thy prosperity he will be as thyself, and will be bold over thy servants."

"But if thou be brought low, he will be against thee, and will hide himself from thy face."

"Separate thyself from thine enemies, and take heed of thy friends."

"A faithful friend is a strong defence, and he that hath found such a one, hath found a treasure."

"A faithful friend is the medium of life, and they that fear the Lord shall find him."

On Charity.

"My son, defraud not the poor of his living, and make not the needy eyes to wait long."

“ Make not the hungry soul sorrowful, neither provoke a man in his distress.”

“ Add not more trouble to a heart that is vexed, and defer not to give to him that is in need.”

“ Reject not the supplications of the afflicted, neither turn away thy face from a poor man.”

“ Turn not away thine eye from the needy, and give him none occasion to curse thee.”

“ For if he curse thee, in the bitterness of his soul, his prayer shall be heard of him that made him.”

“ Let it not grieve thee to bow down thine ear to the poor, and give him a friendly answer with meekness.”

“ Be as a father to the fatherless, and deliver him that suffereth wrong, from the hand of the oppressor; so shall thou be a son of the Most High, and he shall love thee more than thy mother.”

On Silence, and on Speaking in proper Time and Place.—On Secrecy and Discretion.

“ He that can rule his tongue, shall live without strife; and he that hateth babbling shall have less evil.”

“Rehearse not unto another, that which is told unto thee, and thou shall fare never the worse.”

“Whether it be to a friend or foe, talk not of other men’s lives; and if thou canst without offence, reveal them not.”

“For he heard and observed thee, and when time cometh he will hate thee.”

“If thou hast heard a word, let it die with thee and be bold, it will not burst thee.”

“It is much better to reprove, than to be angry secretly: and he that confesseth his fault, shall be preserved from hurt.”

“Admonish thy friend, it may be he hath not said it; and if he have done it, that he do it no more.”

“Admonish thy friend, for many times it is a slander, and believe not every tale.”

“There is one that slippeth in his speech, but not from his heart: and who is he that hath not offended with his tongue?”

Of Friends and Counsellors.

“Every friend sayeth, I am his friend also; but there is a friend which is only a friend in name.”

“Is it a grief unto death, when a companion and friend, is turned to an enemy?”

“There is a companion that rejoiceth in the prosperity of a friend, but in the time of trouble will be against him.”

“Every counsellor extolleth counsel, but there is some who councelleth for himself.”

“Beware of a counsellor, and know before what need he hath, (for he will counsel for himself) lest he cast the lot upon thee.”

“And say unto thee thy way is good; and afterwards he stand on the other side, to see what shall befall thee.”

“Consult not with one who suspecteth thee, and hide thy affairs from such as envy thee.”

“Neither consult with a woman, touching her of whom she is jealous; neither with a coward, in matters of war; nor with a merchant, concerning exchange; nor with a buyer, of selling; nor with an envious man, of thankfulness; nor with an unmerciful man, touching kindness; nor with the slothful, for any work; nor with the hireling of a year, for finishing work; nor with an idle servant, of much business. Hearken not unto any of these, in any matter of counsel.”

Of the Faculties which God hath created man with, and the different degrees of talent bestowed upon them.

“The Lord created man of the earth, and turned him into it again.”

“He gave them a few days, and a short time, and power also over the things therein,”

“And put the fear of man upon all flesh, and gave him dominion over beasts and fowls.”

“And they received the use of the five operations of the Lord,* and in the sixth place, he imparted understanding, and in the seventh, speech and interpreter to the cogitations thereof.”

“Counsel, and a tongue, and eyes, and ears, and a heart gave he them to understand.”

“Withal he filled them with knowledge of understanding, and shewed them good an evil.”

“The wisdom of a learned man, cometh by opportunity of leisure, and he that hath little business shall become wise.”

“How can he get wisdom who holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose discourse is of bullocks?”

“He giveth his mind to make furrows, and is diligent to give the kine fodder.”

“So every carpenter and workmaster, that laboureth night and day, and they that cut and grave seals, and are diligent to make great variety,

* The *opera*.

and give themselves to counterfeit imagery, and watch to finsh a work."

"The smith also sitting by the anvil, and considering the iron-work, the vapour of the fire, wasteth his flesh, and he sightheth with the heat of the furnace; the noise of the hammer and the anvil are ever in his ears, and his eyes look still upon the pattern of the thing that he maketh, and he setteth his mind to finish his work, and watcheth to polish it perfectly."

"So doth the potter sitting at his work, and turning the wheel about with his feet, who is always carefully set at his work: and maketh all his work by number."

"He fashioneth the clay with his arm, and boweth down his strength before his feet; he applieth himself to lead it over; and is diligent to make clean the furnace."

"All these trust to his own hand, and every one is wise in his own work."

"Without these cannot a city be inhabited, and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down."

"But these shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit high in the congregation; they shall not sit on the Judge's seat, nor understand the sentence of Judgment: they cannot declare

justice and judgment : and they shall not be found where parables are spoken."

"But they will maintain the state of the world, and all their desire is in the work of their craft."

"But he who giveth his mind to the law of the Most High, and is occupied in the meditation thereof, will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients, and be occupied in the prophesies."

"Work your work betimes, and in his time God will give you your reward."

THE HISTORY OF SUSANNAH.

(Set apart from the beginning of Daniel, because it is not in the Hebrew; as neither the Narration of Bel and the Dragon.)

There dwelt in Babylon, a very rich and good man, whose name was Joacim, and his wife, who was a most amiable and beautiful woman, was called Susannah. These worthy people lived in the utmost harmony and affection together, and their house was resorted to by all the chief people whose residence was near them ; for added to the

hospitability of Joacim, there was a further inducement, from a magnificent garden which he was master of, which was laid out with so much beauty, and cultivated with so much expence, that it was a great pleasure to behold it; and Joacim permitted all his friends to amuse themselves in this fair pleasure ground, by walking in it, whenever the beauty of the day, or their own inclinations prompted them, and each one was happy to avail himself of this great indulgence; and likewise to visit his house, because he was more honourable and rich than any other, and all persons were proud to be seen in his society.

About this time two of the ancients of the people were appointed judges; they were men far advanced in years, yet skilful in suits of law, and highly thought of, for learning and discretion; and these making a great intimacy with Joacim, were frequently at his house, and when they had any law suits to settle, they used to have the people come to them there, with whom they had business. By these means, the elders became as a part of Joacim's family, and acquainted with all the customs and manners of its inmates. Amongst those which they particularly remarked, was, that the virtuous and beautiful Susannah, walked every day at noon, in the garden of her husband, where being (as she supposed), free from observation, she

indulged herself in the contemplation of the beauties of nature, with which she was surrounded, in offering up her thanksgiving to God, for the blessings bestowed by his mercy upon her ; and in the refreshment, which in that hot country was afforded in sitting by the side of the cooling fountains, with which the garden was adorned.

But however private Susannah might imagine herself to be in these walks, she was seen by the ancient judges, who found such peculiar pleasure in viewing her in these walks, that at length each became enamoured by her beauty ; but each ashamed of the wicked thoughts that filled his mind, carefully concealed his feelings from all, but principally from his learned and prudent companion, whom he naturally supposed would never pardon such depravity, which both his age and situation rendered so much the more offensive and sinful, his having given way to. In this state of mind they continued for some time, when it so occurred, by a strange coincidence, that each at the same moment, influenced by an earnest desire to see and converse with Susannah, walked into the garden for the purpose of meeting her ; it also happened that they met each other, when mutually vexed and disappointed by this unexpected rencontre, they conversed together a short time on trifling subjects, when observing (as an

occasion to part), that it was dinner time ; they pretended to be leaving the garden, and took leave of each other in consequence. But they had no sooner separated, than by other avenues, they again returned to the same spot, and again met in the same path, to the infinite surprise and vexation of each ; however the strangeness of the accident, led to an enquiry into the cause, when they mutually acknowledged to each other, that a wish to behold Susannah, and speak to her, was the sole motive which had brought him there.

From this confession of their wicked inclination, being relieved from the restraint which had hitherto caused them to be silent on this disgraceful affair ; they now entered into a combination to endeavour to seduce her, from her duty to God and her husband, and obtain her affection for themselves ; and they had scarcely settled this league between them so far, before the innocent and unsuspecting cause of all this design and artifice, (according to her daily custom), came into the garden also. The moment the elders had perceived her coming, attended by her two female servants, who were her only companions in these gardens, they concealed themselves, and earnestly watched her every step, whilst the guiltless Susannah, little imagining she was thus observed, continued her walk, followed by her attendants, till she drew near to the side of

the delightful fountain which so often was her private retreat, and whose high jetting waters, were received as they descended, sparkling and transparent, in a spacious marble bason, near the margin of which, grew the most fragrant and beautiful flowers. Here the retirement and solitude of the situation permitting, and the heat of the weather prompting it, she felt an inclination to bathe in the clear and inviting waters of the fountain, and sent her two maids, to bring her wash balls and perfumes for that purpose; she also ordered her servants to close and fasten the garden gates, that she might be perfectly free from the fear of interruption; this order was instantly obeyed, the maidens securing the general entrance into the garden, with great caution, and then retiring into the house for the things Susannah had ordered to be brought to her, by a private way, used only by the domestics of the family.

No sooner had these young women departed for this purpose, and had left Susannah alone, than these wicked men, to the horror and amaze of Susannah, presented themselves before her, and made her acquainted with their evil intentions respecting her, threatening her, that if she either refused compliance to their propositions, or ever betrayed what had then taken place, they would in revenge, accuse her of the most dreadful crime

which could be laid to the charge of a virtuous woman ; and expose her to, and subject her to the judgment of the law, the severity of which, in such cases, she was well aware of. They further informed her, that if she denied their request, they would declare against her, (and that all the people would believe their testimony), that she had sent away her servants on frivolous excuses, (not knowing they were in the garden observing her conduct), that in their absence she might receive the visits of a young man, and by that means they had become witnesses against her, as an unworthy wife, and a disgrace to her family and people.

Susannah on hearing this dreadful denunciation, and feeling the distress of her situation, and the power of her enemies, was almost overpowered by terror, and the difficulties which encompassed her. She was aware how vain it would be to implore their pity, or entreat them to leave her, yet she earnestly and humbly entreated it, with the most fervent promises not to betray what had already taken place. But these men's hearts were hardened, they had gone too far to retreat, and were fully determined on the measures they should adopt against her, except she gave them a favourable reception.

Then Susannah sighed, and in the bitterness of her distress said, " I am straitened on every side,

and which ever way I turn, it is death to me; for if I do this thing, it is death unto me, and if I do it not, I cannot escape your hands."

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" It is better for me to fall into your hands, and not to do it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord."

With this just and pious determination, she cried out loudly for assistance, but her voice was lost in the still louder cries of the two elders, who also called out, and ran and opened the garden gates, to admit as many as might be attracted by the noise and confusion ; whilst the servants hearing such an unusual commotion in the garden, ran with all speed by the private passages, to ascertain what caused it. But what was the surprise of all, and the distress and shame which ensued, when these two wicked men, with the greatest vehemence and malice, made the declaration against the innocent Susannah, which they told her they would do. Till this hour Susannah had ever been considered, and looked up to, as a pattern of virtue, gentleness, and affection to her husband, and although all were unwilling to believe any thing to her disadvantage, yet when the accusation came from two persons of such respect and consequence, whom all the people reverenoed for sanctity of manners and judgment, and who could have no reason, that could be conceived by any, for bearing false wit-

ness against her, no one could possibly doubt the truth, or attempt to vindicate her from the disgrace into which she had fallen ; for who could read the false heart of these men, but God ? or who could imagine there could be any motive sufficiently strong to make such vary in the slightest degree from the most impartial truth and justice.

Under these impressions, shame and reproach fell upon the unfortunate Susannah, and the deepest sorrow on her wretched husband Joacim, who, loving her with the most sincere affection and confidence, was overcome with affliction, at such an unexpected and dreadful account of the bad conduct of the beloved wife of his bosom.

The next morning early the people assembled in the house of Joacim, and there came also the two old men, "full of mischievous imagination against Susannah, to put her to death." And ordered the people to bring her instantly before them.

"So she came, with her father and her mother, her children, and her kindred "

"Now Susannah was a very delicate woman, and beauteous to behold."

"And these wicked men commanded to uncover her face, (for she was covered), that they might be filled with her beauty."

“Therefore her friends, and all that saw her, wept.”

Then the elders stood up, and laid their hands upon her head, and in the most solemn and impressive manner, repeated the charge which they had before made ; that being by accident in the garden, and concealed from the view of Susannah, they observed her come into that place, and order the gates to be shut, and then sending her maidens away, a young man, who was hid, came to her, but they, detesting the wickedness of this proceeding, immediately ran out, and would have secured the man, but he, being stronger than they were, he had escaped, by opening the door and running out, and that Susannah had refused to tell who he was ; “these things however,” (they added), “do we testify.”

During the whole of this terrible detail, Susannah stood weeping, but yet looking up towards heaven ; for her heart trusted in the Lord. Then the assembly, believing the account given by these judges of the people, condemned her to death.

“Then Susannah cried out with a loud voice, and said—O everlasting God, that knowest the secrets, and knowest all things before they be,”

“Thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me, and behold I must die, whereas I

never did such things as these men have maliciously invented against me."

"And the Lord heard her voice."

For as she was led forth to be put to death, there was a young man in the crowd of people assembled, to see the melancholy catastrophe, whose name was Daniel, and his heart was inspired with wisdom and discernment to suspect that there was something wrong in this condemnation, which induced him to cry out, as the procession passed along, "I am clear from the blood of this woman."

Amazed at such an exclamation, breaking the solemn silence which had hitherto been preserved, the chief people hastily turned towards him, and said: "What mean these words that thou hast spoken?"

Then standing forth, he continued thus to address them:—"Are ye such fools, ye sons of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth, ye have this day condemned a daughter of Israel?"

"Return again to the place of judgment; for they have borne false witness against her."

The people amazed at the spirit of the youth, and the propriety of his remarks, instantly agreed to return, and seek further and more particularly into the affair; whilst the mortified and disappointed elders said to him in contempt and derision, "Come sit down amongst us, and shew it us,

seeing God hath given thee the honour of an elder."

But Daniel, unmoved by their scorn or malice, and resolved to persevere in the cause of innocence ; desired of the assembly that those two men might be separated, whilst he examined them. And as soon as they were put asunder, he began a speech to him left, in which he accused him of much wickedness in his former life, to which he had then added the sin of a false accusation ; " For (he continued) thou hast now pronounced false judgment, and hast condemned the innocent, and let the guilty go free ; albeit the Lord saith, ' The innocent and the righteous thou shalt not slay.'"

He then demanded that he would declare before that assembly, as he had seen Susannah and a young man with her, under what tree it was they were conversing together ? To this question the elder without hesitation answered, " Under a Mastick tree."

" And Daniel said, " Very well, thou hast lied against thine own head, for even now the Angel of God hath received the sentence of God to cut thee in two."

This man therefore was put aside, and the other elder brought forward ; who being addressed by Daniel, in much the same style of reproach that the

first had been ; he again put the same question to him—and desired him to inform all there present, since he said he had seen Susannah in improper company, to state under what tree it was he had seen them together ? To this the elder answered as readily as his confederate had done, “ Under a Holm tree.”

Then Daniel said unto him : “ Well thou hast lied against thine own head, for the Angel of God waiteth with the sword to cut thee in two.”

Then all the assembled people, struck with the wisdom of Daniel, and the judgment he had displayed in this examination, “ praised God, who had saved the innocent, and them that trusted in him.”

“ And they arose against the elders ; for Daniel had convicted them of false witness, by their own mouth.”

“ And, according to the law of Moses, they did unto them in such sort, as they maliciously intended to do to their neighbour ; and they put them to death. Thus the innocent blood was saved the same day.”

Nothing now could equal the joy and gratitude of the parents of Susannah, her husband, and herself ; through the mercy of God, an advocate had been raised up, when in the last degree of danger and despair, and her innocence had been clearly

proved, even when those who most loved and believed in her, were almost ready to think evil of her, from the strength of the testimony against her; but all was now happily removed; and neither stain or dishonour was attached to her name.

“Therefore Chelcias her father, and her mother praised God, for their daughter Susannah, with Joacim her husband, and all their kindred, because there was no dishonesty found in her.”

“And from that day forth was Daniel had in great reputation in the sight of the people.”

THE HISTORY OF THE DESTRUCTION

OF

BEL AND THE DRAGON.

(Cut off from the end of the book of Daniel.)

After the death of King Astyages, Cyrus became king of Persia; and Daniel obtained the peculiar favour of this king, who highly esteemed him for his wisdom, and the many talents he was gifted with; Cyrus also found great pleasure in his con-



versation, which both amused and enlightened him ; and in consequence of Daniel possessing so many advantages from the gift of God, and from the cultivation and strength of his mind, he was honoured by the king above all his other friends and subjects.

The Babylonians at this time were great idolators, and fond to worship things the most unlikely to inspire respect and veneration. But Daniel, who had been brought up in the principles of the most pure religion, detested this sin and folly, and as far as he dared, always endeavoured to set it aside, and counteract the machinations and avarice of the priests of these numerous idols, (whom Daniel well knew imposed upon the ignorance of the people, vain beliefs,) for the opportunity, by this means offered, for enriching themselves.

Amongst many others, an idol, called Bel, was at this period the most reverenced and esteemed ; there was consumed daily in his service, "twelve great measures of fine flour, forty sheep, and six vessels of wine." The king himself worshipped this idol, and went daily to his temple for that purpose ; but Daniel remained ever firm to the doctrine of his law, and bowed not the knee to Bel.

The king observing this, as Daniel accompanied him to his devotions, demanded the cause ; to

which Daniel replied, “ That he could not worship idols made with hands, for that he made his prayers to the living God alone, who had created heaven and earth, and who had the sovereignty over every living creature.”

The king then asked him what cause he had to doubt of Bel’s being a living God, when he must be well acquainted with the large quantity of provision, which he every day consumed ?

Daniel smiled at this remark of the King’s, and entreated that he would no longer suffer himself to be deceived by artful devices, but to assure himself that the image called Bel, was only clay within, and brass without ; and that it was utterly impossible it ever could have ate or drank.

This observation made the king extremely angry, for he felt that there was reason in it, and that probably he might be imposed upon ; and he had all the priests of Bel called into his presence, and said to them, that if they did not immediately and truly inform him, how all the provision placed in their hands for Bel, was disposed of, they should die. But if on the contrary, they could certify him that they were devoured by the God, then that Daniel should die, for having spoken blasphemy against Bel. Daniel expressed his perfect satisfaction at this decision ; and said to Cyrus, “ Let it be according to thy word.”

The priests appointed to attend this idol were threescore and ten, besides their wives and children; and being all by the king's command collected together in the temple of that God, Cyrus went there attended by Daniel, to make particular observation of the place, and to repeat the charge respecting the consumption of the provisions, and to impress again both on the minds of the priests and of Daniel, his determination that death alone should expiate the offence committed, on whichever part it might fall.

The priests in support of their own innocence, and to prove it fully to the king's satisfaction—said that they would leave the temple, and that the king, if he so pleased, might set the allotted provision out on the table appropriated for it, before Bel, and then closing the door himself, might put his royal signet upon it, and have the temple carefully watched; and that when he came again in the morning and found that the provision was not eaten up, that then they should be content to suffer death. But if otherwise, and Bel had consumed the whole, then that Daniel should suffer, who had spoken so falsely against them.

The king was perfectly well satisfied with this arrangement, which he conceived would so unquestionably prove the truth of this disputed point. And the priests left the presence of the king,

equally well satisfied that he would still be deceived ; they having most ingeniously and artfully contrived a private entrance into the temple, whereby they could convey away with ease and expedition, whatever was placed before the senseless idol, as gifts or offerings by the deluded people who came to worship it.

The king (who had not the slightest suspicion of any deception) had the usual quantity of provision placed before Bel ; but Daniel, who was aware of the incapability of a statue eating, did not entertain the least doubt of the duplicity of the priests, and that they must have some secret means of conveying these things away. To effect the discovery of this vile imposition, when the priests had retired in such full confidence of success, Daniel ordered his servants secretly, (and unknown to any but the king, in whose presence it was done) to strew very fine ashes over the whole floor of the temple ; and then they went out, the king himself placing his signet on every avenue to the temple, and then departed ; assured that the next morning must decide the important matter.

In the night however the priests with their families, (according to their usual custom) removed the whole of what was there deposited. The king, who was very anxious concerning the result

of this mysterious affair, arose very early, and calling Daniel to him, they together proceeded to the temple, when the king's first enquiry was, " if the seals were whole ? " when being informed they were, the door then being immediately opened, the king looked on the table, and finding all the provisions had disappeared, he cried with a loud voice, " Great art thou, O Bel, and with thee there is no deceit at all."

At this exclamation of Cyrus's, Daniel could not refrain from laughing, and he held the robe the king had on, to prevent his setting his foot over the threshold, until he had caused him to observe the numerous footsteps which appeared in the ashes, which Daniel had caused to be strewed on the floor. Daniel then asked the king what he there saw ? who answered that he discerned the footsteps of men, women, and children. On which, finding he had been so greatly imposed on, he was extremely angry ; and first causing the priests to shew him the private entrance into the temple, by which means this artifice had been practised, he ordered them all to be put to death, and the idol, Bel, he ordered to be given to Daniel to dispose of as he thought proper. And Daniel thus authorised, destroyed the image and his temple also.

And in the same place there was a great dragon, which the people of Babylon worshipped ; the

king likewise countenancing this folly and superstition ; and finding Daniel equally averse to acknowledge this monster also for a God, the king enquired his reasons for it, and said to him, “ Wilt thou also say this is of brass ? lo ! he liveth, he eateth and drinketh, thou canst not say he is no living God : therefore worship him.”

Daniel again assured the king that he could never worship any but the living God, who had made and governed the world. That the dragon, (though alive) was a mortal thing, which if the king would permit, he could easily destroy without either sword or staff ; which must convince him of its incapacity to save even itself from death or danger, and therefore that it could be no God. The king wishing for this conviction also—told Daniel he gave him leave to act by the dragon as he pleased.

Upon this Daniel prepared some poisonous materials, which having made into a kind of pill, and forced into the dragon’s mouth, it presently caused his death ; and Daniel then said to king Cyrus, “ Lo these are the Gods ye worship.”

But the people of Babylon who were strictly attached to this kind of adoration, and as unwilling to have any alteration introduced into it, as the children of Israel themselves ; when they heard of these proceedings of Daniel’s, his destruction of

Bel, with all his priests, and his temple, and now of the dragon, “They took great indignation, and conspired against the king, saying, the king is become a Jew, he hath destroyed Bel, he hath slain the dragon, and put the priests to death.”

Being highly enraged by these reflections, the people came in a tumultuous manner to the palace, and demanded of him that he should instantly deliver up Daniel to their revenge; or else they would destroy him, and all that belonged to him.

The king was greatly distressed by this dangerous combination against Daniel, (whom he so much loved) but the threats of the multitude against himself and his house were too alarming to be disregarded.—“And when the king saw that they pressed him sore; being constrained he delivered Daniel unto them.”

And these people had no sooner obtained their desire, than they took Daniel (the object of their hatred) and threw him into a den of lions, where he remained six days.

There was in Jury a prophet named Habacuc, who having made a pottage with bread broken into it, was carrying it in a bowl, to some reapers which he had in a field, for their dinner. But an angel of the Lord’s met him on the way, and ordered him, instead of taking that provision into the field, to bear it immediately to Babylon, and

give it to Daniel, who was there confined in the den of lions ; upon which Habacuc replied, that he had never seen Babylon, and knew not where the lions den was.

Then the angel, "through the vehemence of the spirit," bore him along through the air, and set him down in Babylon, opposite to the den of lions where Daniel was yet confined.

"And Habacuc cried out to him, saying, 'O Daniel, Daniel, take the dinner which God hath sent thee.'

Then Daniel, being truly sensible of the mercy of God to him in that wretched and dangerous situation, said, "Thou hast remembered me, O God, neither hast thou forsaken them that seek thee, and love thee."

Then with a heart full of thankfulness and gratitude, he arose and eat, after which Habacuc was immediately conveyed away again by the same wonderful means, and set down in his own place.

In the mean time the heart of the king was deeply afflicted by the dreadful fate of his favorite Daniel ; and he secretly deplored him continually, but was fearful to do so openly ; the alarming insurrection which had taken place on his account having been so recent. However on the seventh day, unable longer to restrain his grief, he wandered apart from his attendants, and came to the

mouth of the fatal den, there to bewail the loss of his highly esteemed servant, and to contemplate his many virtues, and the deplorable death that it was not in his power to prevent his falling a victim to.

Drawing near to the cave, with his mind full of these melancholy reflections, the joy he experienced may be easily imagined, when looking into the den, which contained many fierce and hungry lions, he beheld the object of his anxiety sitting amongst them, perfectly free from any injury, and also as free from any apprehension of danger from his savage companions as though they had been so many lambs. The king in a transport of delight, on beholding this miraculous escape of Daniel's from such imminent danger, cried out with a aloud voice, saying, "Great art thou, O Lord God of Daniel, and there is none other besides thee."

And then with his own hand he assisted Daniel out of that loathsome confinement; and without delay, cast those who were the cause of his suffering, and sought his destruction, into the den; where they were devoured in a moment before his face.

THE MACCABEES.

(Before our Saviour Jesus Christ, Maccabees ruled Israel 174 Years)

The books containing the actions, wars, and sufferings of the persecuted Jews, called the Maccabees, present such scenes of horror, blood-shed, and cruelty, that there can scarcely be sufficient selected from their pages, to render a pleasing study to the youthful mind; and the whole must be read at leisure, as other parts of sacred scriptures; but such parts as can be beneficially introduced shall here find a place, such (for instance) as shew with what magnanimity and persevering greatness of mind the children of Israel preserved and followed the strict rules and ceremonies of their religion, however opposed. Of the martyrs who died the most agonizing deaths, rather than submit to the slightest variation in those points, where they conceived the honour of God was concerned, and of the almost more than mortal bravery with which they defended their temple and their city, against the numerous enemies that were continually assailing them. On these occasions, giving instances of personal courage, disdain of danger, difficulties and death, equal to any thing recorded in history. And of firmness of resolution, in

enduring the barbarities of martyrdom, with a fortitude and patience, beyond what frail human nature could be supposed capable of undergoing.

Happy ought we to be, and thankful to our God, that we live at a period when moderation in religious opinions prevail, and when good and just men, respect and esteem each other, whatever their sentiments may be, or their points of faith, in the religion professed by each.

When Alexander the Great, son of Philip of Macedon, had conquered Darius, king of Media and Persia, he reigned over the subjugated countries, and was the first king over Greece. Success attended on this prince, in whatever he undertook, and he subdued and triumphed over all the then known parts of Europe; but though his virtues were so great, and he himself so elated, and filled with pride and vanity that he could not condescend to think, (or suffer others to think), that he was of mortal origin; yet were not these glories and triumphs of long continuance, nor the kingdoms he gained long in his possession. For, soon after he made that magnificent entry into Babylon, (in all the splendour of eastern pomp, and in triumphant exultation for his victories, and amidst the songs of virgins, who strewed flowers in his path, and the acclamations of the multitude of people

assembled to witness a procession, whose grandeur has been transmitted to all succeeding generation) was this puissant king taken with a dangerous illness, some suppose (and with great probability), that it proceeded from poison ; but from whatever cause, Alexander himself was convinced it would prove mortal ; therefore calling together (without delay), his principal favorites, but yet such men as were very honourable, and who had ever been about his person, he divided his kingdom whilst he yet lived amongst them, and soon after departed this life, in the thirty-third year of his age, and twelfth of his reign. The nobles to whom Alexander the Great, left his dominions, became sovereigns over the countries he bequeathed to them, and their children succeeded for many generations.

Many years after the death of Alexander, there was a king named Antiochus Epiphanes, who had been an hostage at Rome, and he reigned over the kingdom of Greece. At that period there were many of the children of Israel, who had become delighted with the customs of other countries, and of the heathen nations round about them ; and who had succeeded in persuading many of their brethren to forsake the established religion of their forefathers, their forms and ceremonies, and to adopt the manners and customs of their surround-

ing neighbours. This advice pleased many, and they went to the king, who gave them a license to follow the ordinances of the heathens, and to act in every thing according to the rules of his people ; and they (with the king's permission), built a school, or (as they denominated it), a place of exercise, in which instructions were to be given, in the laws and ceremonies of the strangers about them.

Whilst these things were proceeding, to the disgrace of the degenerate sons of Israel, who pursued them, and who sought to prevail with their brethren to pursue the same course, Antiochus (feeling himself sufficiently established in his kingdom), determined to make war upon Egypt, and have the dominion over that country also. To effect this, he almost immediately entered that country with a numerous army, with chariots, and elephants, and horsemen, and a great navy. And he conquered Ptolomee, king of Egypt, (who was greatly afraid of him), and taking possession of the strong cities, and the spoils, he returned ; resolving next to go up in the same manner against Israel and Jerusalem, with an army sufficient to reduce their cities, also to be in subjection to him. This determination was speedily put in practice, and conquering Jerusalem also, Antiochus, (like many of his predecessors),

carried away with him, all the treasures which had been amassed, and hidden for security, but which he was fortunate enough to discover ; and also all the rich and beautiful ornaments of the sacred temple, which he plundered of every valuable thing that it contained.

Great and grievous was the mourning throughout Israel and Judea, for this dreadful calamity, the scripture describes it, as surpassing all former lamentation, it was “ so that the princes and elders mourned ; the virgins and young men were made feeble, and the beauty of women was changed.”

Two years after this heavy misfortune had fallen upon this unhappy people, Antiochus sent into Judea and Jerusalem, a collector of tribute, to add still more to their miseries, and this man (who came attended by a great multitude to enforce his exactions), not finding the demand he made answered to his expectation, he fell upon the people, destroying many, siezing with rapacious hand, on whatever property they possessed ; and afterwards setting the city (maliciously) on fire. After this, Antiochus had the city again built up, as a fortified town for his own use, and put his own people in it, to keep it for the purpose of securing his stores and treasures there, more particularly those which he had taken in Jerusalem.

After these transactions, King Antiochus had

letters written to his whole kingdom, to say that they should all become one people ; that every one, from that time forward, and all the nations under his command must forsake their former manner of worship, and adopt his, making sacrifices of only such things, and in such manner, as he should approve. And that those who disobeyed, or those who continued to follow the jewish ceremonies, should instantly be put to death.

This cruel and arbitrary edict, (as may naturally be supposed), was the cause of innumerable deaths, cruelties, and persecutions ; women and infants were put to death without pity, who were found observing the institutes of the law of Moses ; and many were driven into the most solitary and wretched recesses, to preserve the lives of themselves and children, for they were resolved not to eat any unclean things.

“ Wherefore they chose rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the covenant, so they died.”

“ And there was very great wrath upon Israel.”

At that time there dwelt in Modin, a truly devout and godly man, named Mattathias, and he had five sons, one of which was the great and famous Judas Maccabees, (and the hero from whom these books take their name). The rest

of his brethren were likewise men of excellent qualifications, particularly eminent for intrepidity, and all the other requisites, which rendered the men of that age estimable and valuable to their people. His brother Eleazer, (for instance), who afterwards devoted his life, and sacrificed it in the most heroic manner, for the good of his country, (as will be here described), and Jonathan, who afterwards succeeded him in the government, and raised these oppressed and harrassed people, once more, to opulence and consideration amongst the nations, the most famous amongst them. The good Mattathias, had inspired his sons, from their earliest infancy, with the most zealous and patriotic sentiments, he instructed them in every point of the religion of their forefathers, and taught them to hold in abhorrence, every one who neglected his duties, or fell from the ancient laws established by Moses, by the command of God ; to follow the customs and ordinances of the heathens, or any strange nation. And it was so, that at the same time that King Antiochus's officers came to Judea and Jerusalem, to collect the tributes, they came also to Modin, (the residence of Mattathias and his sons), for the same purpose, and likewise to persuade the people of that place, to offer sacrifices according to the manner practised by the heathen, and if persuasion failed, then to compel them, by

punishments and death, to comply with the king's commandment.

Many of the children of Israel assembled together on this important occasion, and amongst them came also Mattathias, attended by his seven noble sons. The king's officers struck by the martial and fine appearance of this family, became anxious to conciliate and be friends with them; and addressing Mattathias in these words, said, "thou art a ruler and an honourable and great man in this city, and strengthened with sons and brethren."

"Now therefore come thou first, and fulfil the king's commandment, like as all the heathens have done, yea, and the men of Judea also, and such as remain at Jerusalem, so shalt thou, and thy house be in the number of the king's friends, and thou, and thy children shall be honoured, with gold, silver, and many rewards,"

"Then Mattathias answered, and spake with a loud voice, "though all the nations that are under the king's dominions obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of his father, and give consent to his commandments,—"

"Yet will I, and my sons, and my brethren, walk in the covenant of our fathers."

Whilst he was yet speaking, one of the apostate Jews came forward, to comply with the orders of

king Antiochus, and sacrifice according to his institution upon the altar erected for that purpose, but this wicked degenerate preparation was no sooner observed by Mattathias, than he was inflamed by a holy zeal, so fervent, that he could not restrain it, and instantly flew upon the Jew, who had thus publicly renounced his pure religion, and killed him on the spot. The king's officer likewise, who had compelled the ungodly sacrifice, he slew with him in his fury, and destroyed the altar which had been raised for unholy and polluting sacrifices. This done, he exclaimed with powerful energy, " whosoever is zealous of the Lord, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me."

" So he and his sons fled into the mountains, and left all that ever they had in the city."

And thus Mattathias and his sons retired from the profanations, which they could neither prevent nor endure the sight of; and not only this family, but many other good men, with their wives, families, and cattle, went into the wilderness, in hopes in that seclusion, to remain in peace. But when it came to be known, that so great a multitude of people had secreted themselves, to elude the king's commands, they were immediately pursued, and so closely beset, that it was impossible for them to escape further, and to add to their great distress, the enemy, acquainted with the tenets of the

Jewish religion, encamped before them, and made war with them on the sabbath day ; a day which they well knew the Jews held sacred, and on which they would not do any thing to defend themselves ; their enemies therefore attacked them, and they, making no resistance, became an easy prey, so that the whole of those who had taken refuge in the wilderness were destroyed, with their wives, children, and cattle ; the people amounting to one thousand. When the report of this fatal catastrophe reached the ears of Mattathias and his sons, they mourned exceedingly for their brethren, “ and one of them said to another, if we all do as our brethren have done, and fight not for our lives and laws, against the heathen, they will now quickly root us out of the earth.”

And from that time they made a resolution, that if at any future period, their enemies should attack them on the sabbath day, they would resist and fight, and defend themselves to the utmost of their power.

The retreat of Mattathias being now well known to those who preserved the laws of their fathers, it was eagerly sought out by them, and he was joined by such numbers of brave and warlike men, that they soon began to withstand openly those that opposed them, and many advantages were gained by Mattathias, assisted by his sons and

confederates. But at length finding that he drew near his end, he called his sons together to give them his last instructions; and advised them in terms so impressive, to pursue the path in which he had trained them, that it may be received as a moral lesson by all, and therefore shall introduce it in his own words. After repeating to them the critical situation of the times, and the necessity of their constant exertion, he thus continued:

“Call to remembrance what acts your fathers did in their time, so shall you receive great honour and an everlasting name.”

“Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.”

“Joseph in the time of his distress kept the commandments, and was made lord of Egypt.”

“Phinees, our father, in being zealous and fervent, obtained the covenant of an everlasting priesthood.”

“Jesus for fulfilling the word, was made a judge in Israel.”

“Caleb for bearing witness before the congregation, received the inheritance of the land.”

“David for being merciful, possessed the throne of an everlasting kingdom.”

“Elias for being fervent and zealous for the law, was taken up into heaven.”

“Ananias, Azarius, and Misael, by believing, were saved out of the flames.”

“Daniel for his innocence, was delivered from the mouth of the lions.”

“And thus consider ye throughout all ages that none that put their trust in God shall be overcome.”

Having said this, and given some further instructions concerning their immediate proceedings, he died. And Judas Maccabeus succeeded him in the command and management of their desperate affairs; of whom it is said, “that he was like a lion in courage.” And all his brothers assisted him with cheerfulness and attention, as they had done their father; and they became very successful in all their battles, and got very great honour. For the fame and strength of Judas daily encreasing, and his army continually augmenting, as his continued success gave encouragement, he at last became so powerful, that he was equal almost to king Antiochus, and constantly studied to do what was most advantageous for the people under his command.

King Antiochus having heard very much of the immense treasures of gold and silver contained in Elymais, a country of Persia; and that it was also greatly renowned for a splendid temple therein, where were coverings of gold, shields, and breast-

plates, which Alexander, son of king Phillip the Macedonian, and the first who reigned over Greece, had left there. He became exceedingly anxious to make himself master of all these valuable articles, and collecting an army together, set out for Elymais to effect this purpose. But the inhabitants of the city having had information of his intentions against them, were prepared to meet him with an equal force, and resist this his unjust enterprize, which they successfully did, and driving him and his people away, preserved their riches unmolested. This disappointment, to which was soon added the alarming account of the victorious progress of Judas Maccabeus, and his heroic brethren, and the astonishing success with which all his exploits were crowned—so effected Antiochus with grief, that he was taken ill, and complained to those about him, “that for grief the sleep was gone from his eyes, and that his heart failed for very care.” His sorrow and disease continuing, he soon after died, leaving a very young son to succeed him, the care of whose education he left in charge to his most confidential friend; before he died, he reflected very severely on himself, for his conduct towards the Jews, and said that all his subsequent troubles was in consequence of it.

Judas Maccabees however, still continued his former triumphant course, and his strenuous exer-

tions to recover the holy city of Jerusalem, out of the hands of the heathen, who still held it in their possession. The successor to Antiochus, who was his son Antiochus Eupator, (yet under guardianship), was determined to oppose him to the utmost, and for this end, gathered together all his friends and allies, and also hired soldiers from other kingdoms, and from isles of the sea, so that at length he mustered a prodigious army, consisting of an hundred thousand footmen, and twenty thousand horse, and thirty-two elephants exercised in battle; and it was their custom to provoke the elephants to fight, to shew them the juice of grapes and mulberries upon linen, which, having the appearance of blood, enraged them. In the division of these animals amongst the army, they always appointed a thousand men to one elephant, who were armed with coats of mail, and with brass helmets, and besides this number, five hundred of the best horsemen, and these were always to be in attendance on the animal, and never on any account to leave its side. And upon the back of each of these gigantic beasts, there were placed strong towers of wood, which covered them, and which were firmly and ingeniously secured, in which were thirty two strong men, that fought upon them, placed besides the Indian that had the management of them.

Nothing could equal the magnificent appearance of the army of Antiochus, thus prepared in terrible array for battle. The sun as it shone upon the shields of gold and brass, reflected the rays so strongly, “that the mountains glittered and shined like lamps of fire.” And the noise of so great a multitude of people, of elephants, horses, and carriages moving along, was so tremendous, that the earth shook under them, and all that heard it were overpowered with dread and amaze. Judas and his valiant brethren however, with their brave associates, undismayed by the dreadful concourse of people combined against them, came out to meet them, and in the onset were successful; but the noble and patriotic Eleazer, (brother of Maccabees, surnamed Savaran), looking upon the stately elephants, and perceiving one of them armed with royal harness, higher than all the rest, and surpassing them all in docility and sense, he immediate supposed that the king, with his principal people was upon that; he therefore enthusiastically resolved, to do an act which might deliver his people, and get him an everlasting fame, though he could not accomplish it without the certain loss of his own life; but little regarding life, when put in competition with the good which might result from it, he hesitated no longer to put himself in the terrific jeopardy he meditated. “For running courageously through the midst of the

battle, slaying on the right hand and on the left, so that they were divided from him on both sides.

“ Which done, he crept under the elephant, and thrust him under with his sword, and slew him, whereupon the elephant fell down upon him, and there he died. ’

Thus nobly fell the intrepid and gallant Eleazer, a victim to the service of his country; by this fully proving his disinterested affection to his country and people. This great sacrifice did not however answer the purpose intended, for the rest of the Jews finding it impossible to withstand the immense Assyrian army, “ and the violence of his forces, turned away.”

The continued series of war and battles with which the Maccabees abound, being but little calculated for the instruction or amusement of the youthful mind, it is in this work curtailed as much as it can be, to give any idea of the nature of the subjects which form it, and the period of time when the occurrences there recorded took place. The specimens given, it is humbly presumed, will answer that purpose, together with that kind of moral edification, which the whole of the sacred writings so abundantly furnish. The death of Judas Maccabeus will therefore finish the extracts

from the Apocrypha; but having mentioned the great fortitude of the martyrs, shall introduce one instance from that sacred record, which must suffice; such subjects being too painful for a feeling heart ever to peruse with any but the most distressing sensations—and therefore unnecessary to present too frequent delineations of.

The armies of the enemies of Judas Maccabeus, and those who had joined that standard, continuing still as powerful as formerly represented, being determined to extirpate entirely the rebel Jews, pursued and beset this brave man in the most terrific manner. And the army of Judas, rather intimidated by their late encounters with the soldiers brought out against them, were now the more fearfully alarmed, when they contemplated the prodigious concourse of armed men now assembled again in the field. Disheartened and sorely grieved, they secretly removed from the camp of Maccabeus, so that out of the three thousand chosen men, of which his little army at first consisted, they deserted so rapidly, that at last “there abode with him only eight hundred men.”

“When Judas therefore saw that his host slipt away, and the battle prest upon him, he was sore troubled in mind and much distressed, for he had no time to gather them together.”

But to those that still remained he addressed himself, and said, "Let us arise and go up against our enemies, peradventure we may be able to fight with them."

But those that he spoke to, (with great prudence) represented to him how extremely improper it would be for so few people to engage with such a force against them, and that how much better it would be for them to save their lives by a retreat, and collecting their now scattered brethren, return and fight them at another time upon more equal terms.

But Maccabeus would not hear of any thing that should appear like fear in his conduct, and he answered his advisers by saying:

"God forbid that I should do this thing, and flee away from them. If our time be come let us die manfully for our brethren, and let us not stain our honour."

Having made this heroic speech, his handful of men came out against the enemy, and inspired by the ardour and sentiments of their commander made a more determined resistance than could have been imagined. Till at last the great Judas Maccabeus was killed; and then the remaining few saved themselves by flight."

Then the mourning and disconsolate brothers of

the fallen chief, took his body and buried it in the sepulchre of his fathers in Modin.

“ Moreover they bewailed him, and all Israel made great lamentation for him, and mourned many days, saying :

“ How is the valiant man fallen that delivered Israel.”

After the death of Judas Maccabeus, and notwithstanding the exertions of his noble brothers, who succeeded him alternately in the government of the people, the Jews were still persecuted by the kings of Persia and Media ; and cruelties were exercised upon them of the most barbarous nature, to compel them to do those acts which their religion termed abominations ; particularly they strove to force these afflicted people to eat the flesh of swine, and make sacrifice of it. Which they firmly rejecting, caused the deplorable death of many— which even the most delicate women for this cause heroically endured, and also to see their tender infants massacred before their eyes, rather than pollute themselves with the forbidden fruit, or refrain from any part of religion. Amongst others was a worthy man named Eleazer, one of the principal scribes, an aged man, and of a very handsome countenance, “ was constrained to open his mouth, and to eat swines flesh.”

“But he choosing rather to die gloriously than to live stained with such an abomination, spit it forth, and came of his own accord to the torment.”

But those who had the management of these affairs, were extremely partial and fond of Eleazer, and most unwilling that he should become a victim to the cruel and unjust persecution; for these persons had been long acquainted with him, and his life had been so blameless, and he was so good, that they were most anxious to preserve him. They therefore took him aside, and earnestly requested him that he would secretly bring such provision of his own that he might safely partake, to the feast which was preparing, (a wicked feast of trial) and pretend to eat of what was prepared by the king’s orders; by which means (which they would appear to be unacquainted with) he might preserve his life, and avoid the pollution also he so much dreaded; and from the old friendship which subsisted between them, be delivered from any further danger.

Eleazer was sensible of the kindness intended by these friends, but reflecting on his age, on the honourable station which he held, on his education from a child, and the law of God, which had been the rule of his whole life, he felt that he had much rather die, than even to appear to act contrary to what he professed. “For it becometh not our

age (he said) in any wise to dissemble, whereby many younger persons might think that Eleazer, being fourscore years old and ten, were now gone to a strange religion,”

“And so through mine hypocrisy, and desire to live a little time, a moment longer, should be deceived by me, and I get a stain to mine old age and make it abominable.”

Finding this was his unalterable resolution, from which it was impossible to turn him, and that he persevered in running himself into a danger they were so anxious to save him from, those friends became implacable enemies, their former love was changed to hatred, because they thought his speeches proceeded from obstinacy and “a desperate mind.” And they led him forth to death without further pity ; and he endured the pains of martyrdom, with the fullest confidence in God, and dying, said, “That his body suffered sorely, but that in soul he was well content, as he feared and obeyed his God.”

“And thus (saith the scriptures) this man died, leaving his death for an example of a noble courage, and a memorial of virtue, not only unto young men, but unto all his nation.”

After this time the successors of Judas Macca-
beus, continuing still the government of Judea and

Jerusalem, thought it their best policy to make a friendly alliance with the Romans, who were then a most powerful nation, and capable of being either a dreadful enemy, or desirable friend. Choosing the latter however, they entered into a friendly league together, and continued a course of fame and honour over the Jews; Judea and Jerusalem remaining under the government of the Maccabees for the space of one hundred and twenty-six years.

ECCLESIASTICUS,

In Continuation from Page 84.

The works of God in heaven, and in earth, and in the sea, are exceeding wonderful and glorious, yet God himself, in his power and wisdom, is above all.

Of the Elements.

The pride of the height, the clear firmament, the beauty of heaven with his glorious shew.

The sun when it appeareth, declaring at his rising a marvellous instrument, the work of the Most High.

At noon it parcheth the country, and who can abide the burning heat thereof.

A man blowing a furnace, is in works of heat, but the sun burneth the mountains three times more; breathing out fiery vapours, and sending forth bright beams, it dimmeth the eyes.

Great is the Lord that made it, and at his command it runneth hastily

He made the moon also, to serve in her season, for a declaration of times, and a sign of the world.

From the moon is the sign of feasts, a light that decreaseth in her perfection.

The month is called after her name, increasing wonderfully in her changing, being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven.

The beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars, an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord.

At the commandment of the holy one, they will stand in their order, and never faint in their watches.

Look upon the rainbow, and praise him that made it; very beautiful it is in the brightness hereof.

It compasseth the heavens about, with a glorious circle, and the hands of the Most High have bended it.

By his commandment, he maketh the snow to fall apace, and sendeth quickly the lightnings of his judgment.

Through this the treasures are opened, and clouds fly forth as fowls.

By his great power he maketh the clouds firm, and the hail stones are broken small.

At his sight the mountains are shaken, and at his will the south wind bloweth.

The noise of the thunder maketh the earth to tremble, so doth the northern storm and the whirlwind; as birds flying he scattereth the snow, and

the falling down thereof is as the lighting of grasshoppers.

The eye marvelleth at the beauty of the whiteness thereof, and the heart is astonished at the raining of it.

The hoar frost also, as salt, he poureth on the earth, and being congealed, it lieth on the top of sharp spikes.

When the cold north wind bloweth, and the water is congealed into ice, it abideth upon every gathering together of water, and clotheth the water as with a breast plate.

It devoureth the mountains, and burneth the wilderness, and consumeth the grass as fire.

A present remedy of all, is a mist coming speedily, a dew coming after heat refresheth.

By his council he appeaseth the deep, and planteth islands therein.

They that sail on the sea tell of the danger thereof, and when we hear with our ears, we marvel thereat.

For therein be strange and wondrous works, a variety of all kinds of beasts and whales created.

By him, the end of them hath prosperous success, and by his word all things consist.

We may speak much, and yet come short, wherefore in sum, he is all.

The Lord is terrible, and very great and marvellous in his power.

There are yet hid greater things than these be, for we have seen but few of his works.

For the Lord hath made all things, and to the godly hath he given wisdom.

Of Dreams.

The hopes of a man void of understanding, are vain and false, and dreams lift up fools.

Whoso regardeth dreams is like him that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind.

The visions of dreams, is the resemblance of one thing to another, even as the likeness of a face to a face.

Of an unclean thing what can be cleansed? and from that which is false what truth can come?

Divinations and soothsayings, and dreams are vain, and the heart fancieth, as a woman's heart in travail.

For dreams have deceived many, and they have failed those who put their trust in them.

Content.

Better to live at home with content, than sojourn in grandeur.

The chief things for life is water and bread, and clothing, and a house to cover shame.

Better is the life of a poor man in a mean cottage, than delicate fare in another man's house.

For it is a miserable life to go from house to house, for where thou art a stranger, thou darest not open thy mouth.

Be it little or be it much, hold thyself contented, that thou hear not the reproach of thy house.

Thou shalt entertain and feast, and have no thanks, moreover thou shalt hear bitter words.

Come thou stranger, and furnish a table, and feed me of that thou hast ready.

Give place thou stranger, to an honourable man, my brother cometh to be lodged, and I have need of my house.

These things are grievous to a man of understanding, the upbraiding of house room, and reproaching of the lender.

FINIS.

Errata.

In page 9, last line, for "to will," read "to kill."
57, first line, for "unexemplary," read "exemplary."
99, line 16, for "alotted," read "allotted."
107, line 16, for "virtues," read "victories."

